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THE STORY OF TRISTAN AND ISEULT

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ARTHURIAN ROMANCES

Unrepresented in Malory's "Morte d'Arthur"

No. II

Tristan and Iseult

Vol. I.

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ARTHURIAN ROMANCES

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"*Ich weiz wol, ir ist vil gewesen,*
Die von Tristande hânt gelesen;
Und ist ir doch niht vil gewesen
Die von im rehte haben gelesen."

GOTTFRIED VON STRASSBURG.—ll. 131–134.

"*Full well I know many there be*
Who have the tale of Tristan read,
Yet well I know that few there be
Who Tristan's tale aright have read."

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Introduction

THE poem of which the following pages offer an English prose rendering is the work of Gottfried von Strassburg, one of the most famous of German mediæval poets, and was composed about the year 1210.

Of the poet himself we know practically nothing; he does not, like Wolfram von Eschenbach, reveal his own name, or his position in life; and we look in vain in his work for those quaintly suggestive asides by which Wolfram takes his readers into his confidence, and reveals himself while he unfolds his story. But while the vigorous

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and original personality of Wolfram von Eschenbach, his depth of thought and loftiness of ideal, have stamped the *Parzival* with a character that has rendered it the masterpiece of German mediæval literature, and incomparably the finest romance of the Grail cycle, it must be conceded that Gottfried was the superior in literary skill —and knew it.

In a notable passage in the *Tristan* (omitted in the translation as having no bearing on the story) the writer passes in review his literary contemporaries, living and departed, placing in the first rank Hartmann von Aue, whom he praises highly for the ease and "crystal" purity of his style; while he sarcastically alludes to one whom he leaves unnamed, as so obscure that a commentator is needed to make his meaning clear! There has never been any doubt that the poet thus pilloried was Wolfram, and that it is to Gottfried's strictures Wolfram alludes in the *Willehalm*.

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And we must admit that Gottfried justifies himself as a critic. As a master of language he is infinitely the superior of his contemporaries. Truly he had an inspiring story to tell, a story of which the poignant pathos and enduring charm have captivated the fancy and thrilled the hearts of countless generations. There is no nation that does not know the story of Tristan and Iseult; no important European literature of which it does not form a part; and to Gottfried von Strassburg belongs the honour of having most adequately told the world's greatest love-tale.

Doubtless a large measure of his success was due to the fact that he had before him a version of the story differing in some respects from that popularised by the wandering minstrels, and the work of a man of superior genius and real literary skill. The fragments of the poem of Thomas of Brittany (the Anglo-Norman writer who was Gottfried's source) which

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have descended to us are marked by much beauty of thought and style: in the *Tristan* of Gottfried we have that rare combination, the work of a true poet translated by one who was himself a greater poet. Never did a fine story fall into hands more capable of doing it justice.

Unhappily Gottfried did not live to complete his work, and of those who at a later date essayed the task * not one was his equal in literary skill. We know, however, from the concluding portion of Thomas's poem that in his version the story ended in the manner of the other poems, *not* in that of the prose version represented by Malory; and we cannot but regret that we have not Gottfried's version of the great closing scene. We can only

* We know of three: Ulrich von Türheim (a writer who apparently had a "lust of finishing" and little regard for differences of style, as he undertook to complete Wolfram von Eschenbach's *Willehalm*); Heinrich von Freiberg; and an unknown writer. Of these Heinrich is distinctly the better poet.

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imagine what his genius would have made of that most pathetic situation in mediæval romance.

A brief introduction such as this does not afford opportunity for a discussion of the problems of the *Tristan* legend. They are many and complex. The very popularity of the story has tended to make the elucidation of its origin and growth more than usually difficult; it has passed through so many hands, and become compounded of so many elements. As we have it now we can detect Keltic names and localities, incidents derived from Northern and Germanic sources; loans from classical tradition; survivals of Aryan folk-lore, shared alike by all nations of the same stock;—all these elements welded into a coherent whole by French genius.* To disentangle the threads forming so complex

* I do not wish to prejudge the question of Thomas's nationality or of his source, but merely to emphasise the fact that, so far as we know at present, the story first assumed coherent shape in the French-speaking world.

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a fabric is a work requiring much time and careful study, nor is it yet complete.

This much we know, that the great body of *Tristan* literature is divided, or rather divides itself, into two distinct families; M. Gaston Paris designates them respectively as the *French* and the *English* versions; Professor Golther as the *Minstrel* and the *Courtly*. To the former, by far the larger group, belong the fragments classed together under the name of Beroul, probably the work of different minstrels; the German poem of Eilhart von Oberge; the various prose versions (including Malory); and, it is generally supposed, the lost poem of Crestien de Troyes. In this version the Tristan story has come into contact with Arthurian legend. Tristan is more or less closely connected with Arthur's Court; Mark is a base and contemptible character; and the effect of the love potion is limited in duration, only extending over three or four years

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The second group is represented exclusively by the poem of Thomas of Brittany, and his translators — Gottfried von Strassburg, and the compiler of the Northern *Tristram Saga*. Here the tale is entirely independent of the Arthurian cycle. King Mark is an honourable and upright character, deceived through his very virtues; and the effect of the love potion endures even to death.

Unhappily this, the finer version of the story, is the less known. In English literature, so far, the story of Tristan in its entirety has not yet been told; to the English public as a whole it is only known in an inadequate or incomplete form. Malory's version, which is the most widely known, only represents the latest and most corrupt tradition; and of *The Last Tournament*, founded upon Malory, it can only be said that it stands at the opposite pole to the work of Gottfried von Strassburg: it is incomparably the worst version of the story

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ever given to the world—a gross libel alike on the lovers and on King Mark. For Tennyson's own sake it should be excluded from any future edition of his works: it is little to his credit, either as man or as poet, that in the most famous love-tale of all time he could see nothing but the lowest and most sordid of intrigues.

Swinburne's poem, beautiful as it is, only deals with a small portion of the story; and the same may be said of Wagner's famous music drama, though both alike, within the limits they have set themselves, have done full justice to their theme.

But the early portion of Tristan's story, before his meeting with Iseult, is also well worth telling, and this consideration has encouraged me to attempt a translation of Gottfried's famous poem. No one can be more sensible than myself of the inadequacy of any attempt to render the full beauty and charm of the original. The very perfection and polish of Gottfried's style forbid

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literal transcription; he is a master of his material and loves to play upon words in a manner no translation can reproduce. He frequently repeats himself (this is also a marked feature of his source), giving the same ideas several times over in slightly varying words. Such repetitions I have, where practicable, avoided, my aim having been to tell the story as exactly as possible in Gottfried's words, but avoiding all unnecessary amplification. These little volumes do not contain the whole of Gottfried, but what they contain is entirely his work. The concluding portion has been condensed from the version of Heinrich von Freiberg, the most successful of Gottfried's continuators, with the exception of the dramatic incident of the meeting of the two Iseults, which is given by Ulrich von Türheim. I have preferred the version of Heinrich for the reason that here the messenger sent to summon Iseult to her lover's sick-bed is Kurwenal, and it is he

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who reveals the secret of the potion to King Mark. This seems to me more in harmony with the rest of the tale than the version assigning the *rôle* either to Kahedîn (who generally predeceases Tristan) or to a hitherto unknown merchant.

It may be hoped that this tale, once so famous, will in its new guise again find favour with many; the lovers of Wagner's great tone-poem, to many of whom the original poem must remain a sealed book, will doubtless find some welcome for this attempt to render accessible the work whence the poet-musician originally drew his inspiration.

Bournemouth, *July* 1899.

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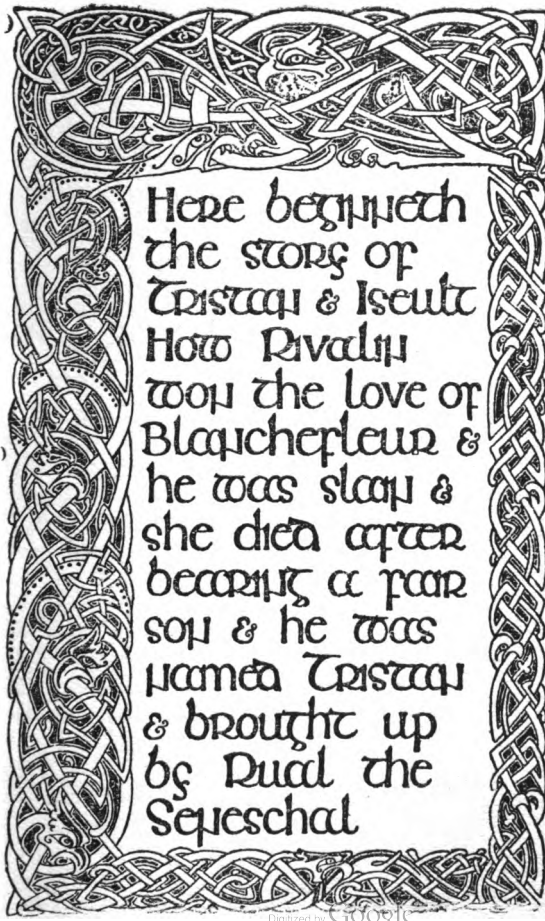

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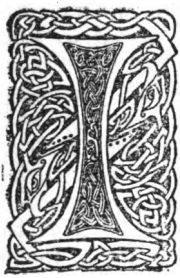

N the olden days there lived in the land of Parmenie* a young knight of royal birth named Rivalin, who held his land of a certain duke named Morgan. He was fair both of face and limb; rich, freehanded, bold and faithful. Now when he had been three years a knight, and was well practised in all knightly skill (whether because his lord had wronged him, or because he longed to try his fortune in war, the chronicle does not say), he raised an army and marched into Morgan's land, and laid siege to his castles, many of which fell into his hands. On his side Morgan gathered his men together and did much harm to Rivalin; and many valiant deeds of knighthood were done, and the land wasted with fire and sword, before they made a year's truce with each other, and Rivalin returned home glad at heart, and with much booty which he shared freely among his knights.

Of Rivalin, the Prince of Parmenie

* Probably the Angle Kingdom of Bernicia, in the North of England.

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But the time was weary to him that he was not fighting, and he longed to win more honour; so, since he had heard men speak of the young King of Cornwall, Mark, that he was both courteous and valiant, he bade them make ready a ship, and provision it well, and set sail southwards, that he might pass the year of truce at King Mark's court. For it seemed to Rivalin a wise and fitting thing for a prince to learn the customs and courtesies of other lands. And while he should be absent from his kingdom he gave his lands and all that he had into the care of his marshal Rual, whom men called the Faith-keeper, for he knew he might trust him well; and with no more than twelve companions he set sail for Cornwall.

How he came to the court of King Mark of Cornwall

When Rivalin came to the Cornish land he heard that King Mark held his court at the castle of Tintagel, and he and his men clad themselves in their richest robes and made their way thither; and Mark received them so courteously that the young knight thought to himself: "I have done well in coming to this folk. All that I heard of Mark is true; he is a good and gracious king." Then he opened

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all his heart to his host, and told him wherefore he had come; and Mark answered him, "Body and goods, all that I have are at thy service to do even as thou wilt with them." So Rivalin dwelt at the court, and all men loved him.

Now the time for the yearly high feast came round; for every year through the month of May Mark held high court, and the knights from Cornwall and England came and brought their ladies with them, and all was mirth and rejoicing. The tents were pitched in a meadow nigh to Tintagel, where there was everything to delight eye and ear: the birds sang in the thicket, the green grass was studded with flowers, a stream rippled through the meadow, and the linden boughs waved in the soft summer wind. The guests lodged each one as it pleased him best: some in pavilions of silk, some in bowers woven of the green summer boughs; they rode knightly jousts, and danced, and made merry all the day long.

But of all the fair maidens there was none so fair as the king's sister Blanchefleur; the sight of her face made many a noble heart beat high for gladness. And

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of all the knights there were none so valiant as King Mark and his guest Rivalin. All who saw the young knight praised his courage and skill and fair appearance; and as the maiden Blanchefleur watched the knightly sport, the love of the stranger prince crept into her heart, and though she hid her secret from all men, yet she knew him to be her chosen lord.

How the Princess Blanchefleur loved Rivalin

And one day he saw her as she sat alone, and greeted her, saying: "God keep thee, sweet lady."

"Gramercy," said the maiden, and spoke shyly. "God give thee all good fortune, Sir Knight; and yet methinks I have somewhat against thee."

"Ah, sweetest lady, what have I done?"

And she said: "Thou hast made me sorrowful for a friend, the best I ever had."

Then the knight thought to himself, "What is this? What can I have done to lose her favour?" For he thought that surely she spoke of some kinsman or friend whom perchance he had overthrown and wounded in a knightly joust. But the maiden was thinking of her own heart. And as the young knight thought upon her words, how she spake, and how she

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looked, love was kindled in his heart too, and though no word passed between them, yet their eyes told the tale, and each knew that they loved the other more and more as the days went on.

When the feast had come to an end and the guests had gone to their own homes, tidings came to King Mark that one of his foes had ridden into his land and was laying it waste with fire and sword. Then Mark collected a great army and rode against him, and in a great battle defeated him with such slaughter that he might well account himself fortunate who escaped with his life. But Rivalin was wounded in the side with a spear, and his men bare him back to Tintagel, as they deemed, dying. At first the rumour went about the court that he was slain, and great lamentation was made, for all men thought great pity that so fair and brave a knight should die so young, and Blanchefleur in her chamber wept, and tore her hair, and was ready to die for grief. She sent for the mistress of her court, and prayed her to order things so that she might see Rivalin once more, even though he were already dead.

How Rivalin was sorely wounded

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Then the mistress thought, "Little harm can come of this, though the knight be not dead, yet if he live to the morning 'tis all he may do, and if I give my lady her will now she will love me the better henceforward." So she said: "Dear princess, I will do all that I may, have no doubt of that; but it will be better that I go first alone and see how the matter stands."

Then she went her way to Rivalin's chamber, as if she had come to tend him, and secretly she told him that her lady desired to see him; and it rejoiced the knight greatly. Then she gave out that she would bring a wise woman—one skilled in the virtue of herbs—to wait on the wounded prince; and going her way to Blanchefleur, she dressed her in a waiting-woman's robe and hid her face in a veil, and so brought her, none knowing it was the princess, to Rivalin's side. And when the maiden saw her love lie there, pale and to all seeming lifeless, she fell down swooning. Then she raised him in her arms and kissed him over and over again, till her kisses brought him back to life and her love gave him strength to live.

And how the twain made known their love to each other

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So Rivalin recovered; but the two still kept their love secret, for they had little hope that Mark would give his sister to a stranger, and none but the princess's faithful lady knew of the matter, or deemed how often the lovers met.

But alas! news came to Rivalin that his foe, Morgan, had broken the truce and marched into his kingdom, and Rual prayed that his lord would return in haste and defend his lands. So he went his way to tell Blanchefleur the ill tidings, and she fell to weeping piteously.

"Alas, alas!" she said, "woe is me! what may I do, left here alone? For when my brother learns, as he sure will do some time, that I have given my love without his will, he will disinherit me and take all my lands and money from me!"

Of the flight of Rivalin and Blanchefleur

"What wouldst thou have me do, sweetheart?" said Rivalin. "Shall I abide here with thee, and lose my kingdom? Or wilt thou fly with me now by night to mine own land? I will do whatever shall please thee best."

"Then will I come with thee," said Blanchefleur. So that evening, when

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Rivalin went to bid farewell to King Mark, the princess disguised herself, and stole down through the twilight to the ship—and they set sail and fled together from Cornwall.

But when they came to Rivalin's country they found that Morgan had gathered together a vast army, and all the land was in terror for him. But first, ere he gathered together his men and went forth against his foeman, by Rual's counsel Rivalin wedded the princess with great state in the minster, in the presence of all his nobles, so that if harm should befall him in the war all should know that Blanchefleur was his wedded wife and their liege lady. And for a time they were happy in each other's love. But when the army was raised, then Rivalin must needs go forth with it; and the war was fierce and terrible—till at last a great battle was fought, in which many a valiant knight was slain, and, alas! among them the brave and gallant Rivalin. And when they brought the news to Blanchefleur she spake no word and shed no tear, but for four days she lay without speaking, and on the fourth day she bare a fair son, and died.

How they were wedded, and died

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And when the faithful marshal Rual saw that both his lord and his lady were dead he knew he must needs make peace with Morgan, yet he feared greatly lest he should harm the child who was rightful heir to the lands. So he caused it to be proclaimed abroad that the babe had died with its mother, and secretly he bare it to his wife, and said that she had borne him another son.

And how Tristan their son was brought up by Rual the Faith-keeper

So Rivalin and Blanchefleur were buried in one grave, and all thought that their child lay with them; but the babe was safe in Rual's care, and he named him *Tristan*, and brought him up as his own son.

Till he was seven years old Tristan dwelt with the wife of the marshal, and had no thought save that she was his mother, for she loved him well; and when he was seven Rual gave him into the charge of a wise and learned man named Kurwenal, that he might journey with him into foreign lands, and there learn the lore of books, and foreign tongues, and all the skill that should befit a prince. For seven years did he dwell abroad, and when he came again to his own land all men were

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loud in his praise, he was so well-grown a lad, so fair to look upon, and courteous in his speech and bearing.

Of the coming of the ship of Norway

Now, after Tristan had dwelt some time in his home, a ship from Norway, laden with all kinds of merchandise, put in at the port, and the men displayed their wares before the castle. News was brought to Tristan that there were some goodly falcons on board, and his brothers, Rual's sons, prayed him to go with them to their father and win leave to go down to the ship and themselves see the birds, and if need were, purchase them. And inasmuch as Rual never denied Tristan anything on which he had set his heart, he said that he himself would go with the lads, and see what the merchants had brought. So they all went together to the ship and found there all that heart could desire—jewels, silk, and fair raiment. Nor was there any lack of birds; peregrines, merlins, and sparrow-hawks—all that could be needed for the chase—and Tristan bade them purchase hawks for himself and also for his brothers.

When they had bought all they desired and were about to leave the ship, as ill luck

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would have it, Tristan spied a chessboard that hung on the wall, and beside it chessmen cunningly carved in ivory. Then he turned to the master of the ship, and said in the man's own tongue, "What, noble merchant, canst thou play chess?"

The merchants looked keenly on the youth when they heard him speak in their tongue, which but few folk in that land knew, and they thought they had never seen a fairer lad, nor one of more courteous manner, and one of them answered:

"Yea, friend, there are many among us who are skilled in the game; if it so please thee, I myself will play a match with thee."

Tristan answered, "Let it be so," and the two sat down to the board.

Then said the marshal, "Tristan, I will e'en return to the castle; if thou wilt thou canst remain here; thy brethren shall come with me, and I will leave Kurwenal to guard thee."

So the marshal and his folk went back to the shore, and Tristan and his governor remained alone on the ship. And if the story tells true never was there a nobler lad than Tristan, or one of truer heart and

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more courteous bearing; and Kurwenal himself, who had taught the boy all he knew, was a good man and true.

How the men of Norway stole Tristan from his home.

Thus Tristan sat and played chess with the strangers, and they looked upon him, and marvelled much at his gentle and courteous ways, and yet more at his skill in tongues, for scarcely might they tell of what land he came, so many foreign tongues he spake. All the terms of chess fell readily from his lips, and he taught them much they knew not before. Also he sang to them strange sweet melodies, with a cunning refrain, till the strangers, listening, thought it would be a good thing for them could they take the boy with them—his skill would bring them both gold and honour. So secretly they bade the oarsmen draw up the anchor, and put to sea, and this they did so quietly that neither Tristan nor Kurwenal knew aught of the matter till they were a good mile from shore.

At last Tristan won the game, and looked up, and took note of what was around him, and when he saw how he had been entrapped, never was any lad more sorrowful. He sprang to his feet, crying,

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"Ah, noble merchant, what means this? What will ye do with me? Whither are ye taking me?"

Then one of them spake: "See, friend, thou canst do no otherwise but must even come with us. Be at ease, and make merry."

But Tristan began to weep and lament, and Kurwenal with him, till the merchant and the crew waxed wrathful. So they took Kurwenal and placed him in a little boat, with oars and food, and bade him go where he listed, but Tristan should stay with them. So they set him adrift, and by good hap the current bare him homewards, and he came to the marshal, and told him what had chanced; and Rual and his wife were sorely distressed, and ran, weeping, with all their folk to the sea shore. And as night fell, and they could see nothing, and knew not whither the ship had taken its course, they cried lamenting: "Fair Tristan, courteous Tristan, we commend thy fair body and soul to God; may He guard and protect thee!"

Thus the men from Norway bare Tristan away with them, and deemed they had got all their will. But as they sailed there arose a great tempest, and a mighty

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storm-wind blew the ship hither and thither, so that they could not hold on their course, but drifted even as the wind drove them.

How the storm was so fierce they were forced to set Tristan ashore

And the great waves now tossed them up to the heavens, now drew them down to the depths, so that none might stand on their feet. This they did for eight days and eight nights, and at length one spake, and said: "Surely this is God's doing, and a judgment on us for stealing Tristan from his friends"—and the others answered of a truth they deemed it was even so.

So they took counsel together, and determined if the wind and the waves would abate so that they might put into any port, whatsoever it might be, they would touch at the first land they came to, and there set Tristan ashore, to go whither he would. And even as they had made their compact the winds fell, and the sea grew calmer, and the sun shone once more.

Now, in their eight days' drifting they had come nigh to the coast of Cornwall, and, seeing they were near to land, they drew in, and set Tristan ashore, and gave him bread and other food, saying: "Friend, God give thee good fortune." Thus they blessed him and went on their way.

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Now what did Tristan do? At first he sat him down and wept, for he was but a boy, and all alone in a strange land. Then he knelt down, and held up his hands to heaven, and said, "Dear God, I pray Thee that Thou wouldst look upon me, and be gracious to me, and shew me how I may come where I shall find folk. Here I am all alone, with no living soul near me, and I fear me much for this great wilderness, for I see nothing but wild rocks and sea, and I fear for the wolves lest they devour me, for the day draws towards eventide."

How Tristan landed in Cornwall

Then he bethought him that he would climb one of the cliffs which were near at hand, if by chance from the summit he might see something of human life, or see some shelter where he might pass the night. Now Tristan was richly dressed in a robe and mantle of silk, green as the grass in June, and furred with white ermine. He drew up his robe higher through his girdle, and folded his mantle, laying it across his shoulders, and so set out inland.

The way was rough, and there was neither path nor road; hand and foot were both needed to make his way. So he climbed over stock and stone till he came

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out upon the hilltop, and found a curving path, narrow, and overgrown with grass. He followed this down to the valley, and it brought him out on a fair road, wide, and good for traffic.

The boy sat him down by the roadside and wept, for he was weary and lonely, and his heart turned back to his friends and his country, where he knew the folk and loved them. "Ah, God," he said, "I have lost both father and mother. Alas! had I but left my foolish chess, which I shall hate for evermore! Ill luck betide ye all, falcons, hawks, and merlins! Ye have taken me from my father, my kin, and all who wished me well, and now are they all in sorrow for me. Sweet mother, I know well how thou art mourning, and thou, too, father! Could I but let them know that I am living and in good health! But I know well that neither they nor I may be joyful till we have tidings one of the other!"

And met with two pilgrims.

As he sat thus lamenting he saw coming towards him two pilgrims, well on in years, with long hair and beard. They were clad in linen garments, with a hood, and scallop shells and suchlike tokens sewn upon them. They were barefooted, and held staves in

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their hand, and on their back were palm branches; and as they went they chanted their prayers and psalms. As they drew near to Tristan, and he saw what manner of men they were, he said joyfully: "Now thanks be to Thee, O God. Of these good folk need I have no fear." He waited till they were so close they needs must see him, and then went towards them courteously, with outstretched hands.

The pilgrims greeted him in kindly wise: "God save thee, fair friend, whoever thou mayst be."

Then Tristan bowed to the old men, and said, "God bless such holy company," and they looked on him and said, "Dear child, whence art thou, and who has brought thee hither?"

Now Tristan was wise and prudent for his years, and he thought it might be well not to say what had really chanced. "Dear sirs," he answered, "I am a native of this land, and this morning I rode forth hunting in the wood with my comrades, and outrode huntsmen and hounds. They knew the wood-paths better than I, and so it chanced that I took a path that led me astray. I came over this hill, and thought

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to lead my horse downwards, but he wrested the bridle from my hand, and fled back into the wood. Then I struck this path that led me hither, but now I know not where I am, nor whither I should go. Good sirs, tell me whither ye may be bound?"

"Friend," they answered, "we hope to-night to sleep in the city of Tintagel."

Then Tristan courteously prayed them to let him go with them.

"Dear child," said the pilgrims, "come with us an thou wilt."

So he turned with them, and they went on together, and Tristan talked with the old men, and answered them so readily and so courteously, that they wondered much, seeing his fair face and his rich dress, and said within themselves: "Who may this lad be, who has such courteous manners?" Thus they walked on a mile or so.

How he joined himself to the men of King Mark

Now, even as they went, it chanced that the hounds of King Mark had that morning chased a stag and slain it by the roadside. The hunters had come up with them, and were blowing gaily on their horns. When Tristan saw them he said to the pilgrims: "Sirs, these be the hounds

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the stag, and the folk I lost earlier in the day. With your leave I will rejoin them."

"God bless thee, lad," they answered, "thou goest to good fortune wherever thou goest."

"Fair thanks, good sirs, God keep ye," said Tristan courteously, and turned towards the hunt.

When he came up they were even about to quarter the stag.

"Halt!" cried Tristan; "what woodcraft is this?"

"'Tis the custom of our land," said the huntsman. "Canst thou shew us a better?"

"Yea, forsooth," said Tristan. "In my land we skin the stag and take out the entrails ere we cut it up."

The huntsman looked on the lad, and saw he was richly clad and of noble bearing, and being himself courteous, he said, smiling: "See, if thou wilt, thou canst shew us how these things are done in thy land. I and my fellows will gladly aid thee."

Then Tristan laid aside his mantle, and rolled up his sleeves, and tucked his flow-

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And showed them sundry secrets of woodcraft

ing curls behind his ears, and bent down over the stag, and shewed the huntsman how in his northern land they skinned the quarry and cleaned it, and cut it up into its several parts. And when he had finished, he bade them lay all the pieces in order on the skin, and take the head in their hand, and so bear it to their lord. Then because they were mightily pleased with his skill and courtesy, they prayed him to ride with them to court, and Tristan said: "That may I well do. Take up the stag, and let us hence."

As they rode together the huntsmen asked him who he was and whence he came. And Tristan said: "Far to the north lies a land, Parmenie—there my father is a merchant, and hath riches sufficient to live right well in merchant wise. A brave man and good is he, too, and made me learn all that I might. Often there came to us merchants from foreign lands, and I learned their speech and their ways, till at last a desire came upon me to see the folk and the countries of which I had heard, and I thought thereon early and late, till at last I ran away from my father and came

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hither with merchants. Now ye know all."

"'Twas well done, lad," said the huntsmen, "for life in a strange land teaches men much. Surely that land is blest of God where a merchant bears such a son as thou art; no king could have trained his son better. Tell us, fair youth, how did thy father call thee?"

"Tristan," he answered. "Tristan is my name."

"Nay," spake another, "what made him call thee thus? Surely thy fair and smiling youth might have been better named"

Thus they rode on, talking together, till they came in sight of the Burg. Then Tristan brake two boughs from a linden, and wove them into chaplets for himself and the chief huntsman.

"Tell me," he said, "what is yon castle?"

"Tintagel," said the other.

"God keep thee well, Tintagel, and all the folk within thee," quoth Tristan.

"A good wish, fair lad, and may fair befall thee within our walls."

As they came near to the castle gates Tristan bade them ride in order, two and

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two, and give him a horn that he might blow a blast thereon. So they passed through the gateway in fair order, and Tristan blew a melody on his horn the like of which they had never heard before, and all joined in, so that the courtyard rang again.

How Tristan came unknowing to his uncle's court

When the king and his courtiers heard the strange notes they were startled, and made their way to the palace door to see who this folk might be, and marvelled much to find that they were but their own people. And when King Mark saw Tristan his heart went out to him, though he knew not that he was of his own blood and his own kindred, and he greeted him kindly; and Tristan answered again in such wise that Mark wondered, and called up the huntsmen, and said:

"Who may this lad be who speaks thus courteously?"

"Lord," answered the other, "he is a Parmenois, and he says his name is Tristan, and his father a merchant, but that I may not believe, for what merchant would ever have brought up his son in such courtly wise? He is learned in the chase, too, and hath shewn us how to skin

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and divide the quarry in such cunning fashion as we never knew before."

Then the king bade the younger courtiers fetch Tristan into the palace and bring him before the throne, and he said:

"Tristan, thou must needs do me a favour, and I will not have it otherwise."

"It shall be as thou wilt, my lord."

"Thou shalt be master of my hunt, Tristan."

Then all around laughed gaily, and the lad answered: "Command me as thou wilt, lord. Huntsman and servant will I be to the best of my power."

"Then let it be so," said King Mark.

Thus Tristan, all unknowing, had come to his own people and his mother's home, and yet deemed himself a stranger in a strange land.

King Mark bade the men of his court treat the lad kindly, which they were willing enough to do, and he himself loved him dearly, and wherever he went would have Tristan at his side.

One even after meat they sat in the hall, and a harper sang a lay before the king. Tristan listened to the sweet notes till he could no longer keep silence.

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Of Tristan's skill in music

"Master," he said, "thou harpest well, 'tis even so that the lay should sound; 'twas made by Britons of Gurûn and his lady."

The harper said nothing till the lay was ended, and then he turned him to the lad and said: "What dost thou know of the lay, fair youth? Canst thou sing it?"

"Yea, good master," said Tristan; "I was taught it aforetime, but so little skill have I, I dare not play before thee."

"Nay, friend," said the harper, "take this harp, and let us hear how men play in thy land."

"Is it thy will that I play?" said Tristan.

"Yea, fair comrade, harp on."

So Tristan took the harp in his hands that were well skilled to such a task, and struck the notes softly, and sang the lay of Graalent and his proud lady; and Mark sat on his throne and listened, and marvelled much at his skill, for indeed, as the old romances tell us, there was no knight in those days who could touch the harp or make songs and sing them as Tristan could; and even to this day we have some of the lays he sang. All the courtiers

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came into the hall and drew near to hearken, for they knew not which was the sweetest, his harping or his singing. And they said, each to the other: "Who is this lad who is dwelling among us? For none other is there in all this land who can be compared with him."

And King Mark said: "Tristan, may he be honoured of God who taught thee this skill, and thou with him. Thou shalt play to me when the night falls; it will keep thee from slumber, and rejoice us both."

"That will I gladly," said the lad.

"And canst thou speak all these tongues in which these lays be made?" said Mark. And his knowledge of strange tongues

"That can I of a truth," said Tristan.

Then all the strangers at court drew near—men of Norway, Scotland, and Ireland, Danes and Germans—and to all of them Tristan spake in their own tongue.

Then King Mark said: "Tristan, in thee is all that I need in my friend; henceforth will we be comrades. Robes and horses, as many as thou wilt, canst thou have, and take here this bracelet and

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this golden horn; dwell here with us, and be joyful."

So Tristan abode at King Mark's court, and was loved of all men. And meanwhile the marshal, Rual, sought through the wide world to find him.

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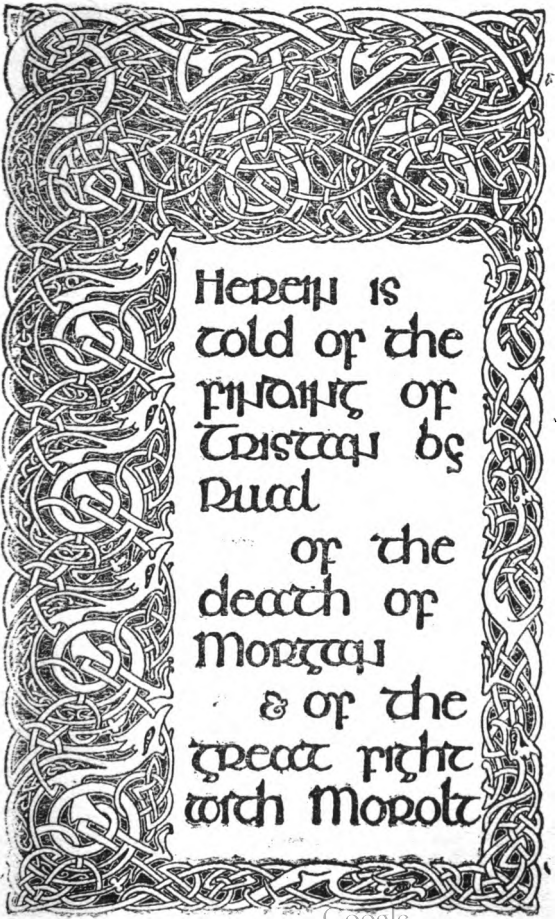

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OR Rual, the marshal, the Faith-keeper, had set sail, with much money in his ships, vowing he would not return till he might bring back his young lord, Tristan. He came to Norway, and went through the whole land, seeking for the boy, but could hear no tidings of him. Then he sailed to Ireland, and sought him there, but in vain; and when he found his money was well-nigh spent, he sent his folk home, and sold his horses, and went himself on foot through the country, till at last, when he had spent all he had, he was forced to beg his bread from place to place. Yet he never rested, but wandered on from land to land, ever hoping to find the boy.

How Rual set forth to seek Tristan

At length, in the fourth year, he came to Denmark, and as he went from town to town, asking all he met if they had seen his young lord, he fell in with the two pilgrims whom Tristan had met in Cornwall, and they told him how they had seen even such a lad as he described; and they

And how he fell in with the pilgrims

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told him the time they had seen him, and how he was clad, the fashion of his dress, his face and his speech, and Rual knew well it could be none other than his foster-son. And when he heard where they had parted from him, in Cornwall, and nigh to Tintagel, he said to himself: "This surely is the hand of God, for if Tristan be indeed in Cornwall, then has he come to his own land and his own folk, for Mark, the king, is his uncle, his mother's brother. Now God prosper my journey, for I must needs seek Cornwall without delay."

So he bade farewell to the pilgrims, thanking them for their good tidings, and took his journey to the sea-coast, scarce resting on his way. But when he came thither, there was no ship bound for Cornwall, and he must needs wait a while. And when he found a ship it took him not into Cornwall, but to Britain, and he had a long journey on foot before he found the place he sought.

And came at last to Cornwall

It was on a Saturday, early in the day, that he came to Tintagel, ere the folk went to Mass, and he took his stand outside the Minster. He would fain have

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asked tidings of the folk around him, but deemed they would disdain him, being so worn and travel-stained.

Then King Mark came with a goodly following to Mass; and Rual looked well on them, and saw not him whom he sought. So he took courage, and when the king left the Minster he spake to an old man of courtly bearing, and said: "Sir, of thy good will I pray thee tell me if there be here at court a boy named Tristan?"

"A boy?" said the other. "Nay, but there is a young squire, shortly to be made a knight, whom the king loves much. He is courteous and skilled in all knightly ways; a well-grown youth with brown curling hair and fair face, a stranger, and we call him Tristan."

"Sir," said Rual, "art thou of the court?"

"Yea," said the other.

"Then I pray thee of thy courtesy do this thing for me. Say to Tristan that a poor man, one of his fellow-countrymen, would fain speak with him."

So the courtier went his way and told Tristan, and he came swiftly, and when

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Of the joyful meeting between Rual and Tristan

he saw who it was that sought him, he cried: "Now, blessed be God, father, that I see thee once more!" and laughing for joy, he ran to him and kissed him, even as a son should; and, indeed, no father on earth might do more for his son than Rual had done.

"Tell me, father," said Tristan, "how fares it with my mother? And my brothers, are they well?"

"In sooth, my son, I know not, for since the day I lost thee I have not set foot in mine own land, nor seen any whom I knew."

"What dost thou mean, father? And now I see thee thou art thin and worn, and poorly clad."

"'Tis for thy sake, son, and for seeking thee."

"Then will I repay thee all thy toil. Come now to the court with me."

"Nay, son, that may I not. Thou seest well I am clad in no courtly wise!"

"Nevertheless thou must needs come, that my lord the king may see thee."

Then Rual thought within himself that when King Mark heard all that he could tell him, and knew Tristan to be his

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nephew, he would care little for his torn clothing; a messenger who bears good tidings is ever well clad! So the two went together to the court, and King Mark said to Tristan: "Say, Tristan, who may this man be?"

"'Tis my father, sire," said Tristan.

"Is that so?" asked the king.

"Yea, of a truth."

"Then shall he be welcome here."

And with that all the courtiers came and greeted him kindly, for they saw that though Rual's clothes were torn and threadbare, yet he was tall and stately to look upon, and had the manner of one well used to courts.

The king bade them give him fitting robes, and made him sit and eat at his own table, and bade Tristan wait upon him; but Rual's greatest pleasure was to look on the lad whom he had found again. Then after meat the king questioned Rual as to how he had come thither, and of his country.

"Lord," said Rual, "'tis four years and a half since I left my own land, and since then I have asked tidings of nothing save of that which I sought, and which hath brought me hither."

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"And what may that be?"

"Tristan, my lord, whom thou seest here. And in sooth I have three sons, by God's grace, at home, who are dear to me as sons may be; were I at home now they would all be knights, yet had I suffered for these three one-half of what I have suffered for Tristan, who is no son of mine, I had done much."

"No son of thine?" said the king. "How may that be? He calls himself thy son."

Rual reveals the secret of Tristan's birth to King Mark

"Nay, lord, mine is he not, yet I am his, for I am his servant."

Tristan gazed at him, startled at his words, and Mark said: "Tell us, why hast thou left thy wife and thy children, and suffered so much for him if he be not thy son?"

And Rual hesitated, wondering if he might dare tell the truth, and said: "I might indeed tell thee that which should make thee marvel much, yet know not if I dare."

"Speak on, good friend," said Mark kindly. "Say who *is* Tristan."

Then Rual spake: "Sire, dost thou remember Rivalin, who came from afar,

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and dwelt in this court, and how he won the love of thy sister Blanchefleur, and she fled with him? They were wedded indeed, as I know well, for I was Rivalin's man, and should be now were he living. But, alas! he fell in fight with his foe, Duke Morgan, as thou hast doubtless heard. And when the tidings came to my lady her heart brake, and she bare a son, even Tristan who stands here, and died." And Rual burst into tears and wept as he thought of all the bygone sorrow.

And King Mark himself wept when he heard of his sister's death; but Tristan grieved most to think that he might no longer call Rual his father.

Then the marshal went on to tell them how he had hidden the truth that his young lord lived for fear lest Morgan should slay the child, and how he had named him *Tristan* for his mother's sorrow, and brought him up as his own. And he told them how he had sent him to foreign lands to learn all that befitted a prince, and how he had been stolen by the merchants, and had come, without knowing, to his mother's land. Then he drew from his finger a ring, and gave it to

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Mark, and when the king saw it he knew it again as one that his father had given him, and that he had given to his sister Blanchefleur, and he said:

"Tristan, come hither and kiss me. So long as I live will I be a father to thee, and thou shalt be mine heir. And for thy father and mother, God rest their souls, they were true lovers."

Then he praised and thanked Rual for his fidelity, and all the courtiers strove to shew him honour, but Tristan himself was but ill pleased.

"This is a wonder, and no great pleasure," he said. "I hear my father say my father is long since slain, so now am I fatherless who had two fathers. To-day I rejoiced, thinking I had found my father, and now he whom I had found robs me of two—of himself and of him whom I had never seen!"

"Nay, nay, my son," said Rual, "thou hast lost nothing. I am thine as I ever was, and thou hast gained a father in my lord thine uncle. I would pray that he make thee knight speedily, and help thee to win back thine own lands."

Mark thought this good counsel, so he

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made a great feast, at which Tristan and thirty of his comrades were made knights, and bade him go back to his own land, and win it again from Morgan, and then return to Cornwall.

How Tristan sailed back to Parmenie

So Tristan sailed again northward, and all the folk were indeed joyful when they saw their lord return with his son, and still more joyful when they knew the truth that Tristan was indeed their rightful prince, and son to Rivalin, whom they had loved.

Then Tristan and his comrades dealt cunningly, for they learnt where Morgan was to be found, and then they rode forth as if to hunt, but under their hunting dress they were well armed, and Rual and his men-at-arms were not far from them. And as they had purposed, they met the Duke, and Tristan told Morgan who he was, and prayed him to yield up the lands he had taken. But this Morgan was no ways minded to do, and he answered Tristan scornfully, saying he was no rightful prince, for his father and mother had not been lawfully wedded. At this insult, which he knew for a lie (since Rivalin and Blanchefleur had been wedded in the

And slew Morgan

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Minster before Rual and all the nobles), Tristan waxed wrathful, and drew his sword upon Morgan, and smote him through helmet and head, so that he fell dead from his steed. Then Morgan's men attacked Tristan fiercely, but Rual came to his master's aid, and they beat back Morgan's men, and so Tristan became lord of his own lands once more.

And won back his kingdom

But now his heart was torn in two, for he loved Rual and his own country, and yet he longed for Cornwall and his mother's folk. And he thought how he had promised to go back to his Uncle Mark, and be to him son and heir, and it seemed him well that he should give Parmenie to Rual to be his and his son's after him. And though his people prayed him to abide with them, yet he held to his purpose; but ere he sailed away he made Rual's two elder sons knights, and commended them to the loyalty of his vassals, but Kurwenal and twelve of his comrades would he keep with him, and so he took ship again for Cornwall.

Now, when Tristan came again to his uncle's kingdom he found all the land in dismay, for Morolt, a mighty champion

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from Ireland, had landed in the country, and demanded from King Mark the tribute due to Gurmun, King of Ireland.

Of the coming of Morolt; and the tribute to Ireland

The story of the tribute was this: Gurmun of Africa had, with the favour of the Romans, won Ireland, and defeated the men of England and Cornwall while Mark was yet a youth. As tribute from the defeated lands he claimed the first year a hundred marks of tin, the second year a hundred marks of silver, and the third a hundred of gold. The fourth year came Morolt, Gurmun's brother-in-law, and demanded thirty lads of noble birth, or else a champion to fight with him in mortal combat. But since Morolt was known far and wide as the fiercest warrior of his time no man was willing to fight with him. King Mark sent an embassy to Rome to pray counsel of the senate, but they could give him no aid. So whenever it pleased Morolt to come into Cornwall and demand this tribute, little as Mark liked it, the lads were forced to go.

Tristan had heard tell of this when he dwelt in Cornwall, and now, when he came back to Tintagel, he found all the city in mourning, for the nobles had been

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summoned to court to cast lots and see on whom the tribute should fall. So when Tristan came they had but little heart to give him welcome, for all, from the king downward, were overcome with grief.

How Tristan upbraided the nobles for their cowardice

But for that Tristan cared little; he made his way boldly into the hall to where men drew the lot, and King Mark and Morolt sat side by side. "My lords," he said, "all ye here who draw lots and sell your own children, have ye no shame for the disgrace ye bring on this land? Nobles are ye all by birth and bearing; your country should be honoured rather than dishonoured by your deed. Yet here have ye bound yourselves foot and hand with this shameful tribute. Your children, who should be your joy and delight, ye give and have given for slaves and servants, and can shew but *one* man who forces ye to this! For no other necessity is there—yet not one of ye can be found to risk his life upon the chance of a combat! For see, if ye die, death is but short, and soon over, but this shame and sorrow are enduring, so the two may not be weighed the one against the other. And if ye conquer and the wrong is vanquished, then have

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ye the greater reward in heaven and the greater honour on earth. Surely a father should give his life for his child, who is his own life? 'Tis dead against God's law that he should sell his child into slavery that he may himself live in freedom! If ye take my counsel, following the laws of God and of honour, ye will choose out a man from among ye to fight for ye, and leave the issue of the combat to God. Morolt may indeed be strong and skilful, but God never yet forsook the man who fought in a rightful cause! Do not this dishonour to your country and your noble birth."

"Ah, sir," said they all, "but this man is not as others: none may prevail against him."

Then Tristan answered, "Let such talk alone! Do ye forget that ye are all of noble birth, the equals of king and kaiser, that ye sell and barter your noble children, who are even as ye are, to be body-slaves and thralls? But if indeed there be no man among ye who dares to fight for the right in God's Name against this one man, and ye care to leave the chance to God and to me, then will *I* set

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my life on this venture. If I fall no man of ye is one jot the worse, your need is neither less nor more than it was; and if I conquer, then may ye thank God and not me. For with God and the right on my side are we three against one, and though I know not much of knighthood, yet I trow I may well hold my own!"

Now, Morolt heard all this as he sat beside King Mark, and was angered at heart that Tristan, who looked such a youth, should speak so valiantly, and he hated him bitterly.

Then Tristan said again: "Speak, lords all, what is it your will that I shall do?"

"Sir," they said, "if it might be that the chance you have given us come to good, it would profit us all greatly!"

"Then, since it seems good to ye, I will e'en try my fortune, and see if God favoureth me or no."

Then King Mark rose up and came to him, and prayed him not to risk his life on so dangerous a venture; but Tristan would hearken neither to commands nor to prayers; he turned to Morolt as he sat, and spake aloud: "Sir, tell me what dost thou desire here?"

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"Friend," said Morolt, "what need to ask? Thou knowest well what I do here, and whom I demand."

Then Tristan said: "Listen, my king and ye lords. Sir Morolt, thou art right—I know well why thou art come hither, and hold it for a shame and a disgrace. The tribute has been paid over long. In the days when thy folk wasted our lands and destroyed our castles and slew our men, it might not be otherwise; but now are our lands flourishing, and our men many, and we can come with our armies and take back that which hath been taken from us. If my counsel be followed all that thy king holds of ours shall be restored to the last ring—yea, our tin shall be paid back in gold! Stranger things and more unforeseen have come to pass ere this! God grant me this, for in His Name do I demand it, and with mine own hand, if need be, will I carry this banner into Ireland."

And defied Morolt

But Morolt said scornfully: "Sir Tristan, the less thou sayest the better for thee. Brave words may be spoken here, but they shall not hinder us from taking that to which we have a right." Then he turned

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to the king and said, "King Mark, and all ye who are here present to settle with me the tribute, say, am I to take the words Sir Tristan has spoken as your will, and your answer to my claim?"

Then they all answered, "Yea, Sir Knight, what he shall say or do, that is our will, our pleasure, and our counsel."

Quoth Morolt: "Ye have broken the compact, and the oath sworn to my king and to me!"

"Nay," said Tristan, "thou speakest ill, Sir Knight; no faith is broken here. An oath and a compact was there that tribute should be sent yearly to Ireland, or that the matter should be settled by single combat or by battle. So long as the compact be kept by tribute or by combat are we within our rights. Now, Sir Morolt, say, shall the matter be settled between us by single combat or by our armies? Choose which thou wilt: *the tribute* shalt thou have no longer."

And Sir Morolt said: "Sir Tristan, my choice is swiftly made. Few men have I with me, too few to fight a pitched battle. I came here peaceably, as I have come aforetime, and deemed not that matters

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should go otherwise than of yore. I thought to go hence in all good will, and with what was rightfully mine. Now hast thou challenged me to battle, and for that am I unprepared. But I am no child to be terrified by thy rough words and threats. Such pride and boasting have I heard full often; we two will fight it out here, and settle whether thou or I be in the right."

Then Tristan drew off his glove and gave it to Morolt, saying: "My lord King Mark and all ye here present are witnesses that I demand this combat. I will maintain with my hand and sword that neither Sir Morolt here, nor his king who sent him hither, nor any other, hath a right to demand tribute of this kingdom; and may God avenge on this knight here all the shame and dishonour which this land hath suffered."

Then from many a noble heart there went up prayers to heaven that God would look upon their sorrow and need, and free them from their trouble. But though they took the combat thus seriously, it seemed to Morolt but a small matter. With haughty countenance he proffered his gage to Tristan; in truth the combat was much

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to his liking, for he held himself bound to come off victor.

Of the great fight between Tristan and Morolt

The time was fixed for the third day, and as the news spread through the country the folk came from far and near, till it was as if the city were girded about with a mighty army. But King Mark was sad at heart; rather would he have paid the tribute all the days of his life than that Tristan should be slain, yet he scarce saw how he might escape. And when the day came he himself, with Kurwenal's aid, would arm his nephew for the fight. They clad him all in white armour, and gave him a shield white and shining as silver, with the device of a black boar upon it, and they brought him a gallant steed, with trappings all of glistening white, like the armour. So he came to the place fixed for the combat; 'twas a little islet in the sea, near enough to the city for the folk to see what went on, but none save the two champions might set foot upon it. There were two small boats ready, each of which might carry an armed man and his steed. Morolt had already entered one, and taking the helm sailed over to the island. Landing, he made fast the boat, and mounted his

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steed, making it prance and caracole on the strand.

Then Tristan came to his boat, and stepped in, holding shield and spear. "King Mark," he said, "sorrow not so sore, here must we trust in God. It will help us naught to be downcast; our victory lies not in the chances of knighthood and warlike skill, but in the hand of God. Trouble not for me, for I may well be victor, I feel so strong of heart. Be thou the same. Full often things fall out other than one forebodes. And however it may be, thy folk and thy land which thou hast entrusted to me, thou hast trusted them rather to God Who goeth with me. He will bring right to the right. It is not I, but God, Who goeth to conquer, or to be conquered."

With that Mark gave him his blessing, and he pushed off from land. As he came to the shore he let his boat float whither it would, and mounted his steed, careless of its fate.

"What doest thou?" said Morolt. "Why hast thou set thy boat adrift?"

"Why?" quoth Tristan. "Here of a truth be two men and but one boat, but it

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may be we shall both abide here, and if not both, of a surety *one* shall lie here dead, and methinks he who remaineth victor shall find the boat that brought thee over enough for his return!"

"Of a truth," said Morolt, "if the fight go on it may not be otherwise, but if thou wilt withdraw thy challenge, and yield me my right of tribute over this land, so that we leave this island as friends at peace with each other, it will be to thy profit. Otherwise I shall slay thee, and that were a pity for never saw I a knight who pleased me better."

Then the valiant Tristan answered: "If we are to be at peace the tribute must no longer be paid."

"Nay," said the other, "I will have no peace at such a price; the tribute must go with me."

"We waste o'ermuch time in idle talk," quoth Tristan. "Morolt, since thou art so certain of slaying me, look well to thyself, for fight we must."

With that they set spurs to their steeds and with lance in rest rode straight at each other, and each smote the other so full on the shields that the spears splintered into

thousand pieces, and the knights drew forth their swords, and fought fiercely even as they were on horseback. Each had as it were the strength of four men, and but for his good shield Tristan might scarce have escaped Morolt's onslaught. As it was, in defending himself he held the shield too high, and Morolt's sword cut through the armour, and laid Tristan's thigh bare, so that the blood spurted forth. Of Tristan's wound

"How now?" said Morolt, "wilt thou yield? See'st thou one cannot defend the wrong, and thou art in the wrong, as this wound well shews. Think, too, how thou wouldst be cured of thy hurt. For I tell thee, Tristan, this wound shall be thy death, for the sword was poisoned with a deadly poison, and no leech nor leechcraft can heal thee, saving only my sister Iseult, the Queen of Ireland. She knoweth the virtues of all plants, and many secrets of healing; she can heal thee, but none other on earth can. Yield thee to me, and grant my right to the tribute, and my sister the queen shall heal thy wound, and I will share with thee, as a true comrade, all that I possess, and refuse thee nothing on which thou mayst set thine heart."

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But Tristan spake: "My truth and my honour will I give up neither for thee nor for thy sister. I have here, in my free hand, the freedom of two lands; they shall go hence with me, or I must first suffer greater harm, or even death. I am not driven to such straits by one wound alone that I should yield me here and now! The strife between us is yet undecided, and the tribute is thy death or mine—nor may it be otherwise."

Then, confident in God and the right, Tristan's courage waxed anew: he spurred his horse against Morolt, and smote him with such force that knight and steed fell to the ground; and as he strove to rise Tristan was on him, and smote his helmet from his head. But Morolt was strong and skilful, and he sprang free from the fallen steed, and ran to Tristan and smote his horse a blow that brought it to the earth, for he thought to give himself time to remount and rehelm. So he cast his shield on his back and took his helmet in one hand, and with the other he caught hold of the saddle-bow, and set his foot in the stirrup to mount. But ere he could do so Tristan was upon him, and smote

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him so fiercely that the hand that held the sword fell with a clang of metal to the ground, and he smote him again on the head, so that the sword clave through the steel cap, and as he drew it back with a mighty heave a piece of the blade brake, and remained sticking in the skull, the which afterwards brought much sorrow to Tristan, and had well nigh been his death. Morolt staggered and fell, weaponless and powerless.

And the death of Morolt

"How now? How now?" said Tristan. "Say, Morolt, dost know the token? Methinks thou art sorely wounded; it goeth ill with thee, I ween! However it may be with *my* wound, *thou* needest good leeching! Whatever skill thy sister Iseult may have, thou hast need of it all wouldst thou recover. God hath shewn the right, and made manifest thy wrong; let the rest be in His care, but now is thy pride fallen." With that he came nearer, and took his sword in both hands, and smote off Morolt's head.

Then he gat him to the shore, where he found Morolt's boat; he entered and rowed toward the haven and the folk who awaited him. There by the sea he heard great joy

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and great lamentations—joy for his victory, for it was a blessed day to the men of Cornwall. They clapped their hands, and praised God, and sang hymns of victory to heaven. But the stranger folk, they who had come with Morolt from Ireland, they wrung their hands, and wept aloud for grief. They thought them 'twas time to betake them to their ships; but as they came to the haven they met Tristan, and he said: "Sirs, turn aside, and take the tribute ye see yonder on the meadow. Bear it with ye to your king, and say that my uncle, King Mark, and his land, send him this present, and therewith make known to him that if it be his will to send his messengers hither for such tribute, we, on our part, will not let them return empty-handed, but will send them hence with such honour as we have done to Morolt." And as he spake he held his shield so that the bloody signs of his wound were hidden from the strangers—and that hereafter stood him in good stead.

So the men of Ireland departed from the land, and sailed first to the island, where they found but a mutilated corpse for their lord, and they took up the doleful gift they

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were bidden to bear to their king, Morolt's body, his head and hand, and with wailing and lamentation set sail for their own country. When they came to Ireland they delivered the corpse to King Gurmun, even as they were bid, and the king was wroth, and sorely grieved, for in this one man he had lost heart and courage, strength and counsel. But the queen, Morolt's sister, her grief and lamentation were even greater; she and her daughter Iseult mourned even as is the way of women when they have a sorrow that goeth near to their heart. They kissed the head and the hand that had made so many lands tributary to them, and looked well on the deadly wound in the head. And as they looked the wise queen saw the splinter of the sword yet fast in the skull, and she drew it forth, and she and her daughter wept over it, and laid it aside in a little casket—and that same splinter thereafter brought Tristan in deadly peril. So Morolt was buried, and the King Gurmun caused a decree to be published throughout all Ireland that whoever should land on the Irish shores from Cornwall, man or woman, should be slain; and though

How the men of Ireland gat them back to their own country. Of the wrath of Gurmun and the sorrow of Queen Iseult

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they should offer gold as a ransom for their life, no ransom should be taken—yet that was little use, since Morolt lay dead, and no decree might bring him to life again.

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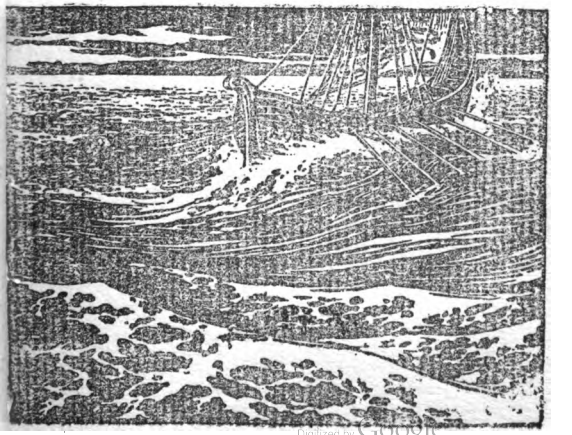
The story telleth of Tristan's voyage to Ireland and of his healing at the hand of the Queen



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ow when Tristan set foot again on the shore the people came to meet him in their thousands, on horse and afoot, and welcomed him gladly; 'twas the fairest day king and kingdom had ever known, for their sorrow and shame were done away, and he had won them honour in their stead. And they lamented over the wound that Morolt had given him, but Tristan made light of it and said it would soon be healed. So they led him into the palace, and disarmed him, and laid him on a soft couch and sent for physicians to heal him. But to what end? Though they summoned the most skilful leeches from all the lands around, not one of them had skill enough to aid him, for the poison was of such subtle venom that they could not bring it from the wound, but it spread all over his body, and his colour and his look were so changed one might scarce know him.

How Tristan's wound might in no wise be healed

Little by little Tristan learnt the truth of Morolt's words, and indeed he had heard

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aforetime of the beauty and wisdom of Queen Iseult, for the fame of her had spread into all countries, and men spake of her as "*Iseult the fair, Iseult the wise, bright as the dawn in eastern skies.*"

So Tristan began to turn the matter over in his mind: he saw well if he were to be cured it could only be by the skill of the Irish queen, and yet how he might in safety come to her he knew not. Yet though he knew 'twould be a question of his life, he said to himself: "Better be in peril, or even dead, than live in this misery and torment." So he set his mind firmly that he would seek the queen, let hap what might. Then he sent for his uncle, King Mark, and told him everything, from beginning to end, as a friend does to his friend, and told him how he purposed in his heart to take Morolt's counsel, and seek healing at the hand of Queen Iseult. And the king liked it both ill and well, for one must put up with trouble if needs be, and of two evils a man will choose the least; but they were at one mind between them as to what it were wisest to do if he took this journey, that they should keep it secret that he went to Ireland, and say that he

So he bethought him to go to Ireland and seek healing at the hand of the queen

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had gone for a while to Salerno, and would abide there till his wound was healed.

Then they sent for Kurwenal, and told him what they purposed, and Kurwenal thought it good, and said he would go with Tristan, and die with him if need be. So when it was evening they made ready a bark for the journey, and provisioned it well, and bare Tristan to the ship with many tears, and as much secresy as they could, so that few knew anything of his going. He commended all his folk to the care of his uncle, King Mark, and bade him see that none departed ere tidings came of how he had fared, and he took his harp with him and nothing more.

So he set sail, with but eight men who had set their lives upon the venture; and Mark looked long and sadly after them, for all the joy of his life had sailed hence with Tristan.

Then Tristan sailed night and day, till they drew near to the shores of Ireland; and when the land was well in sight he bade the captain steer for the chief city, Dublin, for there he knew the queen had her dwelling. And when they were near enough to see it well the captain spake:

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"Master, I see the city: what dost thou counsel?"

And Tristan said: "Let us anchor here till evening be past and the night well advanced." So they cast anchor and rested through the evening.

Of Tristan's coming to Ireland

When night came he bade them row closer to the city, and when they were but half a mile from shore Tristan bade them clothe him in the poorest garments they could find in the ship, and set him in the little boat they had brought with them, and give him his harp and enough victuals to last three or four days. And when all this was done he called Kurwenal and the sailors to him, and said: "Friend Kurwenal, take thou this ship and this people for thine own, and care for them well and kindly for my sake, and when thou art come again reward them well, and bid them keep secret what has happened here. And do thou return home, and greet my uncle, and tell him that I am living, and trust, by God's grace, to be made whole. He shall in no wise grieve for me, for if all go well I shall see him again within this year. But say in the court and abroad that on the way hither I died of my sick-

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ness. And as for my folk who are there, see thou keep them together, and wait for the year's grace, and if I come not in that time then take my men and get thee home to Parmenie, to Rual my dear father. Tell him from me that I pray him to reward my love and faith in him by his love to thee; and for all that have served me faithfully pray him to give them thanks and reward according to their service. Now, dear friends, I commend ye all to God; go your way and set me afloat; I must throw myself on God's grace. 'Tis time ye save life and limb by flight, for it draweth near to morning."

So with many tears and lamentations they set him afloat on the wild sea; never was there a sadder parting! He who has won and lost a faithful friend will know how deep was Kurwenal's sorrow; yet, though his heart was heavy, he must needs sail homeward even as his lord bade him.

And Tristan was left all alone, floating hither and thither till the morning light; and when the day broke and the men of Dublin saw the rudderless boat tossing on the waves they bid men put out from the haven and see what it might be. When

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they drew near there was no man to be seen, but from the boat came the sound of harping and the sweetest singing they had ever heard, and they rested on their oars to hearken. Yet, sweet as the song was, Tristan's heart was not in it, but he sang as a martyr, out of his sorrow and suffering.

When the music stayed the ship drew nearer, and the men caught hold of the little boat, and looked, and saw him lying therein, ill clad and worn with sickness, and marvelled much that he could make such sweet music; and they greeted him kindly, and prayed him to tell them who he was and how he came thither.

How he feigned him to be a minstrel

Then Tristan said: "I was a minstrel, and well skilled in all kinds of music, and in such jests and sport as are the manner of courts, and thereby I won much money, and having much desired yet more. So I turned my thoughts to merchandise—which thing has undone me. For I took a comrade, a rich merchant, and we two loaded a bark in Spain and would sail to Brittany; but on the sea a robber-ship assailed us, and slew my comrade the merchant, and all our people, great and

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small, so that I alone escaped, living, but with this wound. And this was by virtue of my harp, for when I told them how that I was but a minstrel they gave me for my prayers this little boat, and food whereon I have lived till now. Forty days and forty nights have I floated, in much pain and suffering, wherever the winds drove me or the waves bare me, and I know not where I may be, nor what it were best to do. Now, sirs, I pray ye help me, and may God reward ye."

"Friend," said the messengers, "thy sweet voice and thy music shall bring thee to profit, thou shalt no longer float without comfort or counsel. Whatsoever hath brought thee hither, whether it be the guidance of God or the chance of wind and wave, we will bring thee to where thou shalt find folk." And so they did, for they towed him into the harbour, and made the boat fast, and said: "Sir Minstrel, look well on this castle and this fair town beside it; dost know what town it is?"

"Nay, sirs, I know not what it may be."

"So will we tell thee; thou art at Dublin in Ireland."

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"Then praises be to God, who hath brought me to a kindly folk, for surely there will be some among ye who will aid me in my need."

With that the boatmen began to tell their fellows all that had chanced; how, as they drew near to the boat, they had heard so sweet a harping and song that the choirs of heaven could scarce be sweeter, and how it was but a poor minstrel, wounded even to death. "Ye may see from his look he can scarce live over the morrow, and yet in all his suffering he has so brave a courage that one might search through all lands without finding a heart that would bear so heavy a misfortune as if it were so light a matter."

So the citizens went and spake with Tristan, and he answered them even as he had answered the sailors, and they prayed him to sing to them, and he did after their bidding. And when they saw how, in spite of his deadly wound, he could yet play and sing so sweetly, they were moved with pity, and they bade bring him from his ship and bear him to a physician, and say that he should take him into his house and do all he might for his healing, and

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they would pay the cost. And this they did; but though the physician put forth all his skill it helped Tristan but little.

How tidings of the wounded minstrel were borne to the queen

Now, the tale of the coming of the minstrel, of his deadly wound and his sweet singing, was spread abroad through all the city, and among those who came to see the stranger was a certain priest who was himself skilled in all manner of music, and knew many a foreign tongue. He was of the queen's household, for he had taught her from her youth, and from him she had learned much of her skill, and she would now have him to teach the Princess Iseult, her only child. When he saw how courteous Tristan was, and what a skilled musician, he pitied his suffering, and went his way to the queen, and told her that there was a minstrel in the town, sorely wounded, and dead even while he lived, yet that never man born of woman might equal his skill in music, or his courage.

"Ah, noble queen," he said, "could we but bring it about that thou shouldst see him, for 'tis nothing but a marvel that a dying man can harp and sing with such sweetness when he knows that no skill or counsel can aid him. For cured he may

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not be; the physician who has had him in his care has now ceased to do aught for him—skilful as he is, 'tis a case beyond his wisdom."

"See," said the queen, "I will tell my chamberlain, if he may still bear it, and can endure that man handle him and move him, that he have him carried up here to us, and we will see if any skill can aid him, or if he be past cure."

This was done even as the queen commanded; and when she saw Tristan, and beheld his wound and his appearance, she knew the poison, and cried: "Ah! poor minstrel, thou art wounded with a poisoned weapon!"

"I know not," said Tristan, "I cannot say what it is; but hitherto no skill of leechcraft has profited me. I know not what I can do more, save commit myself to the care of God while life may last. But may He reward all who shew me kindness in this my need, for indeed I need help sorely. I live, and yet am dead."

Then the queen asked him: "Minstrel, what is thy name?"

"Lady, my name is Tantris."

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"Tantris, now trust thyself to me, I myself will be thy physician; be of good courage, and thou shalt do well."

"I thank thee, sweet queen. May thy lips ever be young, and thy heart never know sorrow; may thy wisdom endure to give help to the helpless, and thy name be honoured on earth."

"Tantris," said the queen, "if thou art not too feeble, which would be no marvel, wounded as thou art, I would fain hear thee play on the harp; in that I have heard thou art most skilful."

"Nay, lady, my wound hinders me not; I will do right willingly what becomes thy servant."

With that they brought his harp, and sent for the fair young Princess Iseult that she might hear this skilful minstrel; and indeed Tristan played and sang better than ever he had done before, for he hoped that now his suffering was well-nigh at an end; and he sang with such a good courage and so brave a spirit that he won the hearts of all who heard him.

Then the queen said: "Tantris, it may be that I can heal thy wound, and on my side I would ask somewhat of thee. Here

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How the queen promised to heal Tantris

is my daughter Iseult, she is but young, but already has she learnt some measure of skill in music and poetry. Teach her what thou knowest, for thou canst do so better than her master or I can, and I in payment will give thee back life and limb, whole and sound, for both are in my hand."

"Yea," said the minstrel, "if it be so that I may be healed by my singing, then, by the help of God, healed I will be! Fair queen, if it be indeed thy will that I should teach thy daughter, then I think I shall do well, for I have read much, and I know well that no other minstrel of my years is as skilled in many instruments as I. What thou desirest of me is done, so far as lies within my power."

So the queen prepared for him a chamber, and therein every day she caused him to be carefully tended and nursed. And now Tristan profited by the wisdom and foresight that had bidden him hide his wound beneath his shield from the eyes of the strangers, so that none of Morolt's men when they sailed from Cornwall had any thought that he was wounded. For if they had known the truth of his wound,

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as they knew of that which slew Morolt, it had scarce gone so well with the knight!

The wise queen set all her thought and her skill to work to see how she might bring about Tristan's healing. She tended him day and night, and yet she hated him more than she loved her own life. But she had no thought that this was her foe, and the man who slew her brother; had she known she would rather have helped him to death than to life.

Thus, not to make my tale too long, within twenty days the poison had gone forth, and the wound was healing; and every day the young Princess Iseult came and sat beside the minstrel's couch, and learned of him all he might teach of music and song. And the princess knew much already; she could speak both French and Latin, beside her own Irish tongue, and play on the lute and harp and sing sweetly, but under Tristan's teaching she grew daily more skilful, and more learned in courteous ways; till by the time he had dwelt among them half a year all the land spake of the beauty and wisdom and courtesy of the Princess Iseult; and all the strangers who

Of the Princess Iseult of Ireland

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came to her father's court listened in wonder to her sweet singing, for there was no secret of song or carol, pastoral or roundelay, in which she was not versed.

But now Tristan's wound was healed, and his strength and beauty had come back to him, and day by day he was vexed with fears lest some one of the Irish should know him again; and he turned it over in his mind how he might with courtesy take leave of the queen and princess, for he misdoubted him much that they would not let him go, and yet he knew that he only abode there at risk of his life. So he determined what he would do, and one day he went and knelt courteously before the queen, and said: "Dear and gracious lady, may God in His eternal kingdom reward thee for all the help and aid thou hast given me. Thou hast dealt with me so well and kindly that wherever I may be I will sing thy praises, and be thy servant as long as I may live. And now, my queen, let me with thy good will go forth to mine own land, for my matters stand so that I dare no longer be absent."

The queen laughed, and said: "Thy flattery goeth for naught, Tantris; I will

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not grant thee leave. Know that I let thee not hence till the full year be sped."

"Nay, noble queen, bethink thee of the rights of marriage and of true love; for I have at home a wedded wife, whom I love as my own soul, and I know well that she deems me of a surety to be dead, and what I fear is, lest, thinking me to be dead, she be wedded by her parents to another—then shall all joy and gladness be over for me."

"Of a truth," said the queen, "Tantris, thou hast cause for care, and it doeth thee honour; husband and wife none should part. Loath as I am to lose thee, yet I may not withhold my consent; go freely, and I and my daughter Iseult will ever be thy friends; and for thy journey will we give thee two marks of good red gold."

How the minstrel Tantris departed from Ireland

Then the minstrel folded his hands in homage, to both mother and daughter. "God give ye both favour and honour;" and without more words he left them and took ship for England, and from England he made his way home to Cornwall.

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How Tristan sailed for the second time to Ireland & How he slew the dragon & shamed the seneschal & won the princess Iseult to be King Mark's bride

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How Tristan returned to Cornwall and bare tidings of the beauty of the Princess Iseult

ow when Mark his uncle, and all the folk of the land, knew that Tristan had returned safe, and healed of his wound, there was great joy and gladness throughout the kingdom.

The king asked him how it had chanced, and he told him all the story from beginning to end, and they laughed and made great jest over his journey to Ireland, and his healing at the hand of his enemy, and said 'twas the most marvellous tale they had ever hearkened. And when they had laughed over it well they asked him of the Princess Iseult.

"Iseult," he said, "she is so fair a maiden that all that we hear of beauty is but as an idle tale compared to her. No child nor maiden of woman born was ever so fair to look upon. Erewhile I read that Aurora's daughter, and her child fair Helen, were the fairest of all women, that in them was gathered all beauty, as in a flower. Such a tale do I believe no longer. Iseult has robbed me of all faith in it. The sun

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of beauty dawned not in Greece, it hath risen in our own day, and the hearts and eyes of all men turn to Ireland where the sun is born of the dawn—Iseult, daughter of Iseult. From Dublin doth it shine forth to gladden all men. Nor does her beauty lessen that of other women, rather through her fairness is all womankind honoured, and in her fame all women are crowned."

And all who heard Tristan speak felt their heart refreshed within them, even as the May dew refreshes the flowers.

Of the jealousy of the men of Cornwall

So Tristan took up his life again, for it was as if new life had been granted to him, and he was as a man new born. But little by little envy crept into the hearts of the courtiers, and they waxed jealous of the honour and love in which Tristan was held, and a whisper went round among them that he was a sorcerer, and his victory over Morolt and his good luck in Ireland had been brought about by magic.

"Tell us," they said, "how did he escape from so fierce a foe as Morolt? How did he deceive Iseult, the wise queen, so that she tended him diligently with her own hand till his wounds were healed? A sor-

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cerer is he who can thus blind the eyes of men, and bring to a good ending everything to which he sets his hand!"

So they took counsel together, and besieged Mark early and late with their prayers beseeching him to take to himself a wife, so that he might have an heir, whether son or daughter.

But Mark said: "God hath given us a valiant heir already; may he live long! Know ye that while Tristan is alive there shall be neither queen nor lady at this my court."

Then was their envy and hatred greater than before, so great that they could no longer hide it from Tristan, but often threatened him by word and gesture, till he feared for his life at their hands. And at last he spake to his uncle Mark, saying he would do well to give the lords their will, else sooner or later they would surely slay him by treachery.

But the king said: "Be silent, nephew Tristan, that will I never do. I ask no heir but thee; and as for thy life, have no fear of that. What is their ill-will to thee? Such is ever the lot of a brave man. For worth and envy, they are even as mother

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and child, the one must needs give birth to the other. Who is more hated than the lucky man? 'Tis a poor fortune that never saw envy! Go thy way, and know thou shalt never be free from envy: if thou wouldst have the bad love thee, then must thou sing their song, and deal their dealing, so will they cease to hate thee! Counsel me no more to that which may turn to thine own harm; in this will I follow neither them nor thee!"

"Lord and uncle," said Tristan, "give me leave to withdraw from court, for in sooth I see not how to shield myself from their ill-will, and rather than have a kingdom the holding of which shall cost me so much care and thought will I be landless!"

Then when Mark saw he was fully in earnest, he said: "Nephew, I had fain have kept faith with thee, but thou wilt not have it so. Now, whatever chances hereafter, shalt thou hold me guiltless. I am ready to do all thou wilt; say, what dost thou require of me?"

And Tristan said: "Call together thy council, who have aided thee hitherto, ask them what they deem good for the present need and do after their advice."

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So this was done, and the lords came together and took counsel among themselves, and said that the king should wed the Princess Iseult, for by the fame that had gone abroad of her wisdom and beauty they deemed her a fitting wife for their king. Then they chose a spokesman who should declare their wishes, and he said: "Sire, we have heard tell of the Lady Iseult of Ireland, how that she is a maiden in whom all womanly beauty finds its crown. Yea, thou thyself hast heard how she is perfect alike in soul and body. If it may so be that she become thy wife and our queen, we ask nothing better on earth."

How the men of Cornwall besought King Mark to marry the Princess Iseult

And King Mark said: "How may that be, my lords? Even if I desired her as a wife, how might it be brought about? Ye know well how matters stand between the two countries: Gurmun hates me from his heart, and with good reason, for so do I hate him. How then may there be so close an alliance between us?"

"Lord," they said, "it doth often happen that when two lands are at strife peace is brought about through the children, and a great friendship groweth from a bitter enmity. Think the matter over,

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for it may well be that Ireland becometh thine. There are but the three there; the king and queen have no heir save Iseult, she is their only child."

Then Mark answered: "Of a sooth, Tristan has made me think much of the maiden; since he praised her so she has often been in my mind, and 'tis true that the thought of her pleases me above all other maidens. I swear if I may not have her to wife I will have no other woman on earth!" Now, Mark said this not because he really desired Iseult, but because he thought there was little chance that the marriage should be brought about.

Then the councillors spake further: "My lord king, if it please thee that Sir Tristan here, who knows the court of Ireland well, serve as thy messenger, then the matter will surely be brought to a good end. He is wise and skilful in such matters, and, what is more, fortunate in all he takes in hand. He knows all tongues, and will bring to an end what should be ended."

"Ye counsel ill," said Mark; "ye are too jealous for Tristan's peril and hurt. He has been well-nigh dead once for ye

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and your children, and ye would now slay him again. Nay, men of Cornwall, go ye yourselves, I send my nephew no more!"

"Sire," said Tristan, "herein they do not speak amiss. 'Twere fitting that I should be more ready and willing to such a task than another man, and 'tis right that I should go. Uncle, bid me go, and none will do thine errand better than I. But do thou command that these lords, too, go with me, that together we may watch over thine interest and thine honour."

"Nay, since God hath sent thee home safely, thou comest no more into the land or the power of thy foes."

"Uncle, it must needs be so; and whether for good or for ill these lords must needs go with me and see if it be *my* blame that thy kingdom is without an heir! Bid them make ready, and I will myself be steersman and guide them to that happy Ireland, and to Dublin, whence shines forth the sun in which the joy of many a heart is hid. Who knows if the maiden be ours? And, sire, if thou dost win fair Iseult 'twill be little loss to thee if we all die on the quest"

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How Tristan and the nobles set sail for Ireland to woo the princess

When Mark's councillors heard how Tristan spake, never in their lives were they so sorrowful; but 'twas too late: the thing was and must be so. Tristan bade them choose twenty of the king's most valiant knights, and of the folk of the land and strangers he hired sixty, with twenty lords of the council, so that the whole company numbered one hundred; and they provisioned the ships well, and set sail over sea.

But the barons were ill pleased at the journey, and heavy at heart. Many a time they wished that they had said no word of Ireland and the Princess Iseult, for now their own lives were in danger, and they saw no way of escape. They had but the choice of two things: to carry the matter through either by daring or by cunning; and they liked neither. Nor could they think of any fitting ruse, but they said among themselves: "This Tristan hath wisdom and courage enough, and good luck too. If he will but put a curb on his blind rashness he may escape, and we with him. Yet is he so bold and so daring, he cares not a jot either for our lives or his own. Still, our best chance is in his good

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fortune; his wit must find a way out of this peril."

Now they drew near to the coast of Ireland, and one told them that the king abode in the harbour of Whiteford. So Tristan bade them cast anchor far enough from the haven to be out of bowshot; and the lords prayed him earnestly to tell them how he would set about his wooing, for their lives were in danger, and they would fain know what was in his mind. Of their coming to Ireland

And Tristan said: "Have a care that none of ye be seen by the landsfolk, save the serving-men and seamen only; they must remain on deck, but do ye abide in the cabin and keep hidden. I will shew myself, for I know their tongue; the citizens will send out and question us, and I must lie to them as I best can, for if ye be seen, then shall we have strife straightway, and none of us will get to land. And while I am absent on the morrow, for I think to ride forth early and see what may chance, Kurwenal, and another who knows the tongue, will keep guard over ye. But mark this: two days, or perchance three, shall I be absent; after that, if I come not, wait no longer, but flee away

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over seas and save yourselves, for I shall have paid for my wooing with my life. Then can ye counsel your lord to wed as ye may like—this is my thought and my purpose."

Now the marshal of the King of Ireland, under whose care both town and haven lay, came down in full armour, with a body of men, as the decree bade him, that he might ask of all new comers to the haven if they were from King Mark's land or no, and if they were, to put them to death. When Tristan saw them he put on such a hood as a man might wear on a journey, that his face might be the better hidden, and took a cup of red gold, worked in the English fashion, and entered a little boat, with Kurwenal to row him, and made for the shore, greeting them with courteous gestures.

When the folk saw the boat they all ran together, shouting: "To land! to land!"

Tristan put into the harbour, and said: "Good folk, what mean this roughness, and these threatening gestures? I know not what I have done amiss. If there be any one in authority here I pray that he will speak with me."

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"Yea," said the marshal, "here am I, and I must needs know whence ye come and whither ye go?"

"Of a sooth," said Tristan, "an thou wilt bid this folk keep silence so that I may be heard, I will tell thee mine errand gladly." And when they were silent, he went on: "Sir, we are merchants, I and my fellows, and come from Normandy. Our wives and children are with us in the ship, and we go hither and thither, from land to land, buying such things as we have need of. Within this thirty days I and two other merchants set sail to go to Spain, and about an eight days agone a storm arose which separated us, and drave me northwards. I know not how the others have fared, whether they be living or dead; I had much ado to escape with my life. Yesterday at noon the wind fell, and I knew the look of the coast, so came hither to rest me. And at daybreak I made for Whiteford, for I know the town, and have been here aforetime with merchants. But if this folk will not be at peace with me I must perforce set sail again, though I have much need of rest. Yet if thou wilt let me land, then what

How Tristan landed in Ireland

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good fortune I may find will I freely share with thee, that I and mine may remain in peace while I seek my friends ashore, and see if I may here do some trading. Bid thy men be at peace, for they are all putting off in boats, wherefore I know not. Otherwise, I go back to my men, and fear ye all not one straw."

Then the marshal bade his men return to land, and said to the stranger: "What will ye give the king if I protect your lives and goods in this land?"

"Sir, whatever our gains may be, I will give a mark of red gold for each day we sojourn in the land; and thou thyself shalt have this golden cup, if indeed thou art able to assure me of safety."

"Yea," said they all, "that can he, for he is the king's marshal."

Then he gave them the cup, and the marshal thought it a rich and precious gift, and bade him come ashore, and sware that he and his should be in peace and surety. And for that did they win rich payment in royal red gold; red gold for the king's tribute, red gold for the messenger's fee—and 'twas good too for Tristan, since it won him peace and favour.

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Now, the story tells us that there was at that time in Ireland a monstrous dragon which devoured the people and wasted the land; so that the king at last had sworn a solemn oath that whoever slew the monster should have the Princess Iseult to wife; and because of the beauty of the maiden and the fierceness of the dragon many a valiant knight had lost his life. The land was full of the tale, and it had come to Tristan's ears, and in the thought of this had he made his journey.

Of the dragon that ravaged the land

The next morning, ere it was light, he rose and armed himself secretly, and took his strongest spear, and mounted his steed and rode forth into the wilderness. He rode by many a rough path till the sun was high in the heavens, when he turned downwards into a valley, where, as the geste tells us, the dragon had its lair. Then he saw afar off four men galloping swiftly over the moor where there was no road. One of them was the queen's seneschal, who would fain have been the lover of the Princess Iseult, but she liked him not. Whenever knights rode forth bent on adventures the seneschal was ever with them, for nothing on earth save that men

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might say they had seen him ride forth, for never would he face the dragon, but would return swifter than he went.

How Tristan fought with the dragon

Now, when Tristan saw the men in flight he knew the dragon must be near at hand, so he rode on steadily, and ere long he saw the monster coming towards him, breathing out smoke and flame from its open jaws. The knight laid his spear in rest, and set spurs to his steed, and rode so swiftly, and smote so strongly, that the spear went in at the open jaws, and pierced through the throat into the dragon's heart, and he himself came with such force against the dragon that his horse fell dead, and he could scarce free himself from the steed. But the evil beast fell upon the corpse and partly devoured it, till the wound from the spear pained it so sorely that it left the horse half eaten, and fled into a rocky ravine.

Tristan followed after the monster, which fled before him roaring for pain till the rocks rang again with the sound. It cast fire from its jaws and tare up the earth around, till the pain of the wound overcame it, and it crouched down under a wall of rock. Then Tristan drew forth his

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sword, thinking to slay the monster easily, but 'twas a hard strife, the hardest Tristan had ever fought, and in truth he thought it would be his death. For the dragon had as aids smoke and flame, teeth and claws sharper than a shearing knife; and the knight had much ado to find shelter behind the trees and bushes, for the fight was so fierce that the shield he held in his hand was burnt well-nigh to a coal. But the conflict did not endure over-long, for the spear in the vitals of the dragon began to pain him so that he lay on the ground, rolling over and over in agony. Then Tristan came near swiftly, and smote with his sword at the heart of the monster so that the blade went in right to the hilt; and the dragon gave forth a roar so grim and terrible that it was as if heaven and earth fell together, and the death-cry was heard far and wide through the land. Tristan himself was well-nigh terrified, but as he saw the beast was dead, he went near, and with much labour he forced the jaws open, and cut out the tongue, then he closed the jaws again, and put the tongue in his bosom. He turned him again to the wilderness, thinking to rest through the

And slew it

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day, and come again to his people secretly in the shadows of night; but he was so overcome by the stress of the fight and the fiery breath of the dragon that he was well-nigh spent, and seeing a little lake near at hand into which a clear stream flowed from the rock, he went towards it, and as he came to the cool waters the weight of his armour and the venom of the dragon's tongue overpowered him, and he fell senseless by the stream.

And went near to lose his own life

But the seneschal, who would fain be the princess's lover, as he rode homeward, heard the death-cry of the dragon, and bethought him what it might mean; he said to himself: "The beast is either dead or sorely wounded; now is my chance if I work warily." So he stole away from his companions, and rode quietly down a hill to the valley, then he turned his bridle toward the place whence the sound came, and rode swiftly till he found the carcase of Tristan's horse, and there he halted, for his heart misgave him. Then as he heard and saw nothing he took courage and rode still fearful and trembling along the track made by the grass and broken underwood, and ere he knew he came right on the dragon

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lying dead. Overcome by terror at the sight, he turned his bridle so swiftly that horse and man alike stumbled and fell over a little hillock, and when he sprang to his feet he was so terrified he durst not wait to remount, but fled on foot. But as he found the dragon did not move he took heart, and stole back trembling; he led the horse to a fallen trunk and remounted, and then rode with caution nearer to the dragon to see whether it were alive or dead. And when he saw that the monster was in truth dead, he cried aloud: "Now by God's grace I have come hither in a happy hour!"

Of the treachery of the queen's seneschal

With that he laid his lance in rest and rode gaily toward the dragon, crying: "Now art thou mine, my Lady Iseult!" and smote with such force that the spear went through the dragon's jaws, and remained there. This he did out of pure cunning, for he thought: "If the knight who has slain the dragon be living he will not be able to deny that I have aided him." Then he turned, and sought all about to find the knight, for he thought if he were, as well might be, sorely wounded, then he could fight with him, and slay and bury him, and no man be aught the wiser. And

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when he found him not he said: "Well, let him go; whether he be living or dead I am the first here, and I have kinsmen and friends enow, so that if any man would take the credit of this deed he shall but lose by it." So he rode back to the dragon, and with his sword he gashed the carcase here and there. He had fain hewn off the head, but the neck was so thick he might not come at it. Then he took his spear, and brake it in two over the trunk of a tree, and stuck the pointed end in the monster's jaw, as if it had been broken in a joust.

Having thus as he deemed made all safe, he rode back to Whiteford, and bade them go with a waggon and four horses to bring back the head of the dragon, and told every one what he had done, and the sore peril he had been in. "See, see," he cried, "what a man of brave heart and steadfast courage can do for the sake of the lady he loves. I marvelled, and marvel still, how I escaped the danger which beset me; had I been as soft as was another man I had never done it. I know not who he was, an adventurer, who for his cowardice, ere I came up, had met with an evil end. Both man and horse are dead and devoured; the

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horse still lies there half eaten. I have dared more for the love of a woman than ever a man before me!"

How the seneschal feigned to have slain the dragon, and claimed the hand of the princess

Then he called his friends together, and went again to the dragon, and bade them look again on the wonder, and bear testimony to what they saw. The head they cut off and brought again in the waggon, and he fixed a day for them to ride together with him to the court, and claim the fulfilment of the king's promise.

Now, the tale was speedily brought to court, and told in the women's chambers, and never were tidings more unwelcome! To that fair maid the Princess Iseult it was bitter as a death-blow; never had she seen a sadder day. But her mother spake: "Nay, sweet daughter, nay, let it not trouble thee so; we will see first whether this be truth or a lie. God forbid that the thing should be so! Weep not, my daughter; thy bright eyes should never be reddened for so small a grief!"

"Ah! mother," said the maiden, "insult not thy birth and thyself; ere I be that man's wife I will thrust a knife through my heart. Neither wife nor lady shall he have in Iseult, unless he have her dead."

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"Nay, nay, fear not, sweet daughter; whatever the truth may be, thee has he lost, for if all the world were to swear it thou shouldst never wed the seneschal."

Of the wisdom of Queen Iseult

When the night fell the queen wove cunning spells, the virtue of which she knew well, for her daughter's sorrow, so that in a dream she saw all the truth and knew that the seneschal had dealt falsely; and as the day began to dawn she spake to Iseult: "Daughter, art thou waking?"

"Yea, mother mine."

"Then let thine heart be at peace: I have good tidings for thee. The seneschal slew not the dragon. 'Twas a stranger knight—I know not what brought him hither—who did the deed. Come, let us go thither quickly, and we will see for ourselves how the truth may be. Brangœne, rise up softly and bid the squire Paranise saddle our horses; we must ride forth, we four, I and my daughter, thou and he. Bid him bring the horses as quickly as may be to the little postern where the orchard opens on to the moorland."

When all was ready the little company mounted, and rode to the spot where they had heard that the dragon was slain, and

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there they found first the carcase of the horse, and beheld the trappings, and knew that never in Ireland had they seen the like; and they said to each other that whoever the man might be who rode the horse, 'twas he and no other who slew the dragon. Then they rode further and came on the monster as it lay, and it looked so grim and so ghastly in the dim morning light that the women grew pale with dread. The queen said to her daughter: "Now of one thing am I sure: our seneschal never dared face that monster! We may lay aside all care; and, daughter, whether the man be living or dead, methinks he is hidden somewhere near by; let us go and seek him. God grant we may find him, and with his aid overcome the dread that oppresses thine heart."

How Tristan was found by the Princess Iseult

So they parted asunder and began to seek hither and thither, but 'twas the Princess Iseult who first found that which they sought, for she saw a helmet shining from afar, and called to her mother, saying: "Hasten hither, mother, for I see something gleaming there beyond: I know not what it may be, but methinks 'tis like a helmet."

"So think I," said her mother. "I ween we have found that which we sought."

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With that they called the other two, and rode forward together. But when they came nearer and saw how the knight lay they deemed he was dead, and Iseult cried: 'We are undone! the seneschal hath treacherously murdered him and borne him to this bog!"

They dismounted, and all four drew him out of the water to land; they did off his helmet and the steel cap beneath, and the wise queen saw that he yet lived, but that his life hung by a single hair.

"He is living," she said; "let us disarm him quickly. If he be not mortally wounded all may yet be well."

Then the three fair women bent over the knight and began to disarm him with their white hands, and behold, the dragon's tongue fell out from his breast. "What may that be, Brangœne, fair kinswoman, say?"

"Methinketh 'tis a tongue!"

"Thou speakest true, Brangœne,—a tongue it is, and I think me well 'twas once in the dragon's mouth! Sweet Iseult, daughter mine, of a truth we have come on a happy journey. 'Tis the venom of this tongue that has bereft him of his senses."

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When they had disarmed the knight and found no wound upon him they were all joyful, and the queen took an antidote to the poison and poured it between his lips, and when she saw signs of life, "The man will recover," she said: "the venom of the tongue is yielding, he will speedily regain sight and speech." And in sooth, ere long Tristan opened his eyes and looked around him.

And rescued by the queen's wisdom

When he saw the fair women bending over him, he knew them, and said in his heart: "Now God hath surely thought upon me, and hath sent me the three fairest lights the world doth hold—Iseult the sun, her mother Iseult the fair dawn, and Brangœne the stately moon." With that he sighed softly: "Ah! who are ye? and where am I?"

"Canst thou speak, knight?" said the queen. "We are aiding thee in thy need."

"Yea, sweet lady, but I know not how my strength should have vanished in so short a time."

The younger Iseult looked on him; "'Tis the minstrel Tantris, if ever I beheld him!" said she.

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"Is it thou indeed, Tantris?" asked the queen.

"Yea, lady, 'tis I."

"Then say, whence hast thou come hither, or what dost thou seek here?"

"Sweetest lady, I am yet so feeble I cannot tell thee all as it were fitting, but bid them bear me to some shelter where I may abide in secret a day and a night, and when I have once more recovered my strength, then will I gladly tell thee all that it behoves thee to know."

Then between them they helped Tristan on to a steed, and brought him secretly to the palace by the postern door, so that none knew of his coming, and made ready for him a couch and all he needed. Nor did they forget the dragon's tongue, nor his harness, but brought all with them.

And the following morning the queen said to him: "Tantris, thou knowest I have ever been thy friend; I tended thee and healed thee of thy wound: tell me truly by the faith thou owest to thy liege lady, when didst thou come to Ireland, and how didst thou slay the dragon?"

"Lady," said he, "'tis three days since that I came to Ireland with other mer-

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chants, and as we came to the harbour robbers boarded us, and, had I not bought them off, would have taken my life and my goods. Then, since we wished to dwell here in this strange land, and I had heard the tale of the dragon, it came into my mind that as the people were but ill-disposed towards us, if I could but slay the monster I should find favour and peace in the sight of this folk."

How the queen sware peace with Tristan thinking him to be the minstrel Tantris

"Favour and peace shalt thou have to thy dying day," quoth the queen: "thou hast come hither in a happy hour for thyself and us. Ask whatever thou desirest of my lord or of me, and it shall be done."

"I thank thee, lady. I would put myself and my ships in thy protection. I prithee let me not rue the day that I trusted life and goods to thy faith."

"Nay, forsooth, Tantris, have no care for thy life or thy goods: see, I give thee mine hand upon it that none shall touch thee or thine in Ireland as long as I live, and all thou askest of me will I do. But now I would take counsel with thee on a matter that nearly touches mine honour and my happiness."

With that she told him of the seneschal,

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how he would fain lay claim to the princess's hand, and how with lies and falsehood he made belief to have won her.

"Dear lady," said Tristan, "have no care. Thou hast given me back life and strength, both are at thy service to withstand all danger at thy will."

"God reward thee, Tantris. Gladly will I take thine aid, for if this thing should come to pass 'twould be the death of me and of my daughter Iseult."

"Have no fear, lady. But tell me, what of the tongue that was in my bosom, didst thou leave it there, or what?"

"Nay, I have it here; my fair daughter Iseult and I, we brought all that belonged to thee with us."

"'Tis well," said Tristan. "Now, sweet queen, trouble no more, but help me to my strength, and all shall go as thou desirest."

Meanwhile the comrades whom Tristan had left upon the ship were in much trouble and sorrow when he came not again at the end of the three days, and they heard the tale of the dragon — how it had slain a stranger knight and his horse. They said: "Of a truth this must be Tristan; were he alive he had returned ere now." So they

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took counsel, and sent Kurwenal ashore that he might see the carcase of the horse; and when he came there he knew the steed and the trappings for Tristan's, but of Tristan himself there was no sign. He found the remains of the dragon, but not a sign of his lord's armour or of his raiment, and he knew not what to think. "Ah, Sir Tristan," he said, "art thou living or dead? Alas, Iseult, that the fame of thy beauty ever came to Cornwall, if it have brought so noble a knight to so evil a fate!"

How Tristan's comrades deemed he was slain

Then he returned, weeping, to the ship, and told his comrades what he had seen, and they were sorrowful at the tidings, though, in their heart, some of them were not ill pleased. Thus the twenty lords who had come with him were of one accord that they would wait his coming no longer, for they were in haste to be gone from Ireland, but the others would not listen to their counsel, but said they would not leave the land till they knew whether their lord was really dead, and that they would await him for at least two days longer, and the twenty lords must needs yield to their will.

Meanwhile the day had come that King Gurmun had set for redeeming his pledge

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to the seneschal, and all the knights were gathered together for counsel, and the queen had also come thither, for the king trusted much to her wisdom. And before the council he spake with her in secret: "What counsel canst thou give, my wife? For 'twere bitter as death to give our daughter to the seneschal."

"Be at peace," said the queen; "that will we never do; I have well foreseen the matter."

"How, lady? Tell me quickly, that we may rejoice together."

"See thou, our seneschal never slew the dragon as he saith, but I know well who did, and when the time is ripe I will declare the matter. Go thou to thy lords, and say that when thou art well assured of the truth of the seneschal's word thou wilt be ready to keep thine oath. Then sit thou on thy judgment-seat, and bid thy knights to judge with thee, and let the seneschal bring his plea and say as he will, and when the time is ripe then will I come with Iseult, and will speak for thee, for her, and for myself. I will now seek her, and come again swiftly."

So the king went back to the palace and

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sat on the judgment-seat, with all the barons round him, and a great company of knights and nobles, for all were fain to know what should be the end of the matter. And when the queen and princess entered they said among themselves: "'Twere good fortune for the seneschal who hath never had good fortune to win such a maid as this! All men might well envy him."

How the seneschal demanded Iseult to wife

Then the seneschal came forth and stood before the king, and Gurmun arose, and said kindly: "Speak, what dost thou require of me?"

"Lord king," he answered, "I pray only that thine honour and thy plighted word be not broken. Thou didst swear that whosoever slew the dragon, to him wouldst thou give thy daughter Iseult to wife, and this oath of thine hath slain many. But I recked little since I loved the maiden, and I risked my life more often and more valiantly than any man, till at length fortune befriended me, and I slew the monster. See there the head where it lies, I brought it for a token. Now fulfil thy pledge, for the king's word and the king's oath, they should be holy."

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"Seneschal," said the queen, "'tis too much, by my troth, to desire so rich a prize as my daughter Iseult, when thou hast not won it!"

Quoth the seneschal: "Thou doest ill to speak thus, lady. My king, *he* shall decide. He can speak for himself; let him answer me."

But the king said: "Lady, do thou speak for thyself, for Iseult, and for me."

And how the queen made answer to him

"That will I, my lord. Seneschal, thy love may be true, and thou be a valiant man, worthy a woman's love; but he who claimeth a great reward which he hath never merited doeth ill, I trow. Thou hast taken to thyself a deed and a manhood that, as I am well advised, belong not to thee."

"Lady, I know not what thou sayest; I have here a proof of my words."

"Thou hast brought a head, so might another man if he thought to win Iseult by it; but she is not to be so lightly won."

"Nay," said the younger Iseult, "it needeth greater labour for my winning."

"Ah, princess!" said the seneschal, "dost thou count as naught all the perils I have dared for love of thee?"

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"That thou hast loved me may perchance be reckoned to thee for good, but I never loved *thee*, nor looked on thee with favour—nor shall I ever."

"Yea," said the seneschal, "I know well thou doest as all women do: they love those who hate them, and hate those who love them; the crooked they account straight, and the straight crooked. Love is the most uncertain game a man may play at, and he is but witless who risks his life for any woman if he hold not a pledge from her first. And yet whatever thou or my lady the queen may say, the thing must go according to my word, or the king hath broken his oath."

But the queen spake: "Seneschal, methinks thou knowest women so well thou hast become as one of them, for see, thou thyself lovest one who hateth thee, and desirest one who will naught of thee. If that be but the way of women, why do even as they? Deal thou rather as a man, and love the maiden who loveth thee, and desire her who desireth thee. We have heard over-much of thy love for Iseult; she loveth thee not, and that perchance she hath from me, for I loved thee never! And as for

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the king's oath, I tell thee thou didst never slay the dragon; another slew it; and if thou askest me, 'Who was he?' I answer that I know him, and will bring him hither at the fitting time."

"Lady, there is no man shall falsely deprive me of my right and my honour. If he lay claim to it, then must he stake life and limb upon it, hand to hand, before this court, ere I waive a tittle of my right."

"'Tis well," spake the queen, "I will myself be his surety; the knight who slew the dragon will I bring hither on the second day from now."

Then the king and the council said: "'Tis enough. Seneschal, go thou and take measures for the fight, and, my lady the queen, do thou see to thy champion." Then the king took pledges from either side, and they made fast the fight for the third day.

So the queen and the princess went their way and told all to their minstrel, for by now Tristan's health and strength had come back to him; and the ladies looked upon him, and secretly they thought it a strange thing that one so fair in face and so noble in bearing should be but a wandering minstrel, seeking his bread from land to land;

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and they said between themselves: "'Twere more fitting that he should be king and lord of some country; many a folk has a less kinglike ruler. Of a sooth, his looks and his lot match each other but ill." The queen bade her squire, Paranise, look well to the knight's harness, and see that it was well polished and in fair order; and this he did and laid all the pieces together. Now, as chance would have it, the princess came and looked upon the armour as it lay, for her heart was heavy within her for the coming conflict, and she took up the sword and drew it out of the scabbard, and gazed on it long and earnestly, and as she did so her eyes fell on the splinter that was lacking. She thought within herself: "Now God help me! I ween that the splinter that should be here is in my keeping." Then she ran to the casket wherein lay the splinter that her mother had drawn from Morolt's skull, and fetched it, and laid it on the blade, and lo! it fitted as if it were but one, as in truth it had been not two years back.

How the Princess Iseult was ware of her uncle's slayer

Then the maiden's heart grew cold within her, and her colour changed from red to white, and she said: "Ah, unhappy that I am! how came this fatal weapon

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hither from Cornwall? With this sword was my uncle Morolt surely slain, and 'twas Tristan slew him. Who gave it to the minstrel Tantris?" And as she thought, suddenly it was as if she saw the name before her, *Tantris*, *Tristan*, and she knew the one was but the other read backwards, and she cried aloud: "Ah! my heart forbode this falsehood and this treachery, for since I have looked upon him well and marked his face and bearing, I have known he must be of noble birth. But how dared he come hither with his deadly wound? And we have cherished and healed him! *Healed?* nay, not yet, for this sword shall be his death! Hasten, Iseult, avenge thy wrongs. If he be slain with the sword that slew thine uncle thou hast repaid him well!"

And would fain have slain Tristan

Then she took the sword in both hands and ran swiftly to Tristan's chamber, and stood over him as he lay. "Yea," she said, "art thou *Tristan?*"

"Lady, nay, I am Tantris."

"That I know well—Tantris and Tristan they are but one traitor. The wrong Tristan did me shall be avenged on Tantris; thou must pay for my uncle's death."

"Nay, nay, sweetest lady, what wouldst

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thou do? Think of thine own honour and thy fair name. Thou art woman and maid. If men may accuse thee of murder, thy beauty will be for ever dishonoured, the Sun of Ireland that rejoices so many hearts will have set. A sword becomes not those white hands!"

As he spake, the queen her mother entered. "How now?" she cried. "What meaneth this? What doest thou, my daughter? Are these womanly ways? Art thou beside thyself? What wouldest thou with that sword? Is this jest or anger?" But the queen withheld her hand

"Ah, lady mother, 'tis our heart-sorrow. See, this is the murderer Tristan, who slew thy brother; now may we avenge ourselves. Let us smite him through with this sword. A better chance shall we never have."

"This *Tristan?* How dost thou know, daughter?"

"I know it well. He is Tristan. This sword is his; look well on it, and see here the splinter, see how the two fit together! As I laid one on the other I saw well they were but one blade."

"Ah!" cried the queen, "Iseult, what hast thou told me? If this indeed be Tristan, then have I been sorely betrayed!"

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Iseult lifted the sword again, and drew nearer. "Stay, Iseult, stay!" cried the queen, "dost thou not remember how I am pledged to him?"

"I care not, he shall die."

"Mercy, fair Iseult!" quoth Tristan.

"No mercy shalt thou have, traitor!" said the maiden, "I will have thy life."

"Not so, daughter," said the mother. "We may not take vengeance on him lest we break our troth and our honour. He is under my protection, life and limb, with all that belongeth to him. I have taken him into my peace, come what may."

"I thank thee, lady," said the knight. "Forget not that I entrusted myself and all I had to thine honour; my life is in thy keeping."

"Thou liest!" said the maiden, "I know well what passed, and life and shelter did my mother never swear to *Tristan*." With that she would have raised the sword again, but her mother stayed her hand. And in sooth even had Tristan been bound and alone with her she would scarce have slain him, for her womanhood fought hard with her anger, till at length her gentle heart conquered, and she cast the sword

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from her, and fell a-weeping. "Alas!" she cried, "that ever I saw this day!"

But her mother said: "Daughter mine, thy sorrows are my sorrows, and even heavier are they for me. Morolt was my brother, nearer to me than to thee, and he is dead. That was my sorest sorrow; but now I have another. I tremble for *thee*, daughter, and in that sorrow I forget the first; better one grief than two. How of that wretched man who claims thine hand? If we have no champion to overcome him, then thy father and I are dishonoured with thee, and may never more be joyful."

How Tristan assuaged their wrath

Then Tristan said: "Fair ladies both, it is true I have caused ye sorrow, yet it was forced upon me. If ye will, as ye may, remember it, then know I was in peril of death, and a man defends his life as he best may. For the present, as concerns the seneschal, I can bring that to a good end, if ye will let me live. Queen Iseult, and Princess Iseult, I know ye well, that ye are wise and gracious; if I might speak freely, and ye would moderate your wrath against me and this ill will ye have so long borne to Tristan, I would tell ye good tidings."

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The queen looked upon him, and her eyes filled with tears. "Ah!" she cried, "now I hear and know of a truth that thou art Tristan. I doubted me much before, but now hast thou owned the truth unasked. Alas, alas! Sir Tristan, that ever thou camest in my power, since I may not use that power as were most fitting. 'Tis a manifold thing, this royal power, and I ween I might use it against my foe if I would, and do evil against the evil. Shall I withhold my hand? I trow so."

As she spake Brangœne came into the chamber with a smiling face, and saw the sword lying on the ground, and the women with tearful eyes. "What is this?" she said. "What troubles ye all three, and what does the sword here?"

"Brangœne, kinswoman," said the queen, "we have been tricked and betrayed, we have cherished the serpent for the nightingale, our foe who deserved death at our hands have we tended as our friend. This is none other than Tristan! Say, may we avenge ourselves?"

"Nay, nay, lady, thine honour is worth more than the life of thy foe. Avenge thyself thou canst not, but leave him now,

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and take counsel as to what we may best do."

So the three went apart, and the queen spake: "Tristan said even now, that if we would lay aside the ill will we had borne him, he would give us good tidings—what may that mean, Brangœne?"

And Brangœne answered: "Perchance he may mean well by ye both. One must turn one's mantle as the wind blows, and who knows but what he be come hither for your honour? We may well be thankful that God brought him hither at this time to prove the seneschal's falseness. Had we not found him when we did, it had been the worse for thee, my princess! Treat him kindly, for he is nobly born, and both wise and courteous: whatever thine heart may feel towards him, let thy speech be gentle, for 'tis no light matter that hath brought him hither again."

And peace was sworn between them

Then the three went back to Tristan, and when he saw them he knelt before them saying: "Peace, fair ladies. I pray ye grant me my life, since 'tis but for your honour and profit I have come hither."

The queen bade him rise, and each proffered him the kiss of peace, though

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Iseult the princess did it but unwillingly, and they sat down together.

"My queen," said Tristan, "wilt thou be my good friend, and aid me to persuade thy daughter, whom thou lovest, to take as husband a noble king, one well fitted to be her lord; fair, and free of hand; a valiant knight, of a royal race, and richer than her father?"

"Were I sure of the truth," said the queen, "I would even do my best."

How Tristan did his uncle's wooing and won the hand of Princess Iseult

"Yet it is so, lady, for since I was here aforetime I have spoken ever in praise and honour of thee and thy daughter to my uncle King Mark; and 'tis he who hath sent me hither, for we are both at one accord to pray that thy daughter become his wife and lady, and Queen of Cornwall and England."

"Yea, but if I counsel my husband to make peace with King Mark, shall I not do ill?"

"Nay, lady, he must needs know all the tale, only I prithee see that he be friends with me."

"Of that have no fear," said Queen Iseult.

Then the queen sent for the king, and prayed of him a boon, saying it lay near to her heart and to that of her daughter.

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"Thou shalt have what thou desirest," said the king.

"Then, lord, I pray thee to pardon Tristan, who slew my brother Morolt; he is here in my keeping."

"Nay, that is more thy matter than mine. Morolt was *thy* brother. If thou hast pardoned Tristan, then so have I."

Then the queen told her lord the whole matter, and Gurmun thought it good, and bade Tristan come before him; and he came and knelt, saying: "Grace, my lord the king."

"Rise, Sir Tristan," said Gurmun, "and kiss me, for though I were unwilling to pardon thee, yet since my wife hath done so, I may not do otherwise."

"Lord," said Tristan, "with me thou dost pardon my king and both his realms?"

"Yea, sir," said Gurmun.

Then the king bade Tristan sit beside him, and asked him of his errand; and Tristan told him all he had told the queen, and of his fight with the dragon and all that had chanced.

"How may I know, Sir Tristan, that thou speakest truth?" asked Gurmun.

"My lord, I have twenty of King

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Mark's barons with me, they will be surety enough."

Then Tristan bade Paranise go to the ship, and seek out Kurwenal, and bring him to the palace in secret. And when Kurwenal saw his lord he was greatly rejoiced: "Sir, we feared thou wast slain, and with great difficulty did we keep the lords here; they have sworn to sail hence to-night."

"That they must not do," said Tristan. "Go hence, tell them I have done all for which I came hither, and bid them to-morrow clothe themselves in their richest attire, and make ready to ride to court whenever I send a messenger to summon them."

So Kurwenal departed and told the barons the good tidings: but they in their envy said: "Now surely this man is a sorcerer, see how he brings to a lucky end everything to which he sets his hand."

Now the day had come on which the single combat was to be fought, and a great folk had come together, for all wondered who should fight with the seneschal for the maiden Iseult; and each man asked his fellow: "Who may he be who claims

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to have slain the dragon?" and the question was passed from one to another, but none could give an answer. Meanwhile Tristan's comrades had come from the ship clad in their finest raiment, and he himself robed him as became his royal birth; and when the queen and Princess Iseult saw him they said to themselves: "Truly this is a gallant knight; methinks our cause is in good hands." Seats were set for the barons in the halls, and the people gazed on them, and marvelled at their rich attire and their silence, for there was not one of them that knew the speech of the country.

How all the folk came together to know the end of the seneschal's matter

Then a messenger came from the king to call the queen and the princess to the court, and she spake: "Rise, Iseult, and we will go. Sir Tristan, do thou abide here, and when I shall send for thee, come thou with Brangœne."

"Gladly, my lady queen."

So came Queen Iseult, leading with her her daughter, even as the dawn that brings with it the rising sun. With measured pace the maiden walked beside her mother, clad in a robe of brown samite, and a flowing mantle furred with ermine, which she held together with the fingers of her

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right hand. On her head was a circlet of gold set with jewels, and but for the gleaming stones one would scarce have known that the circlet was there, so golden were her shining locks.

So the fair women passed up the hall, greeting all as they came, the mother with word, the daughter with gesture. When they had taken their seat by the king the seneschal stood forth, and said: "My lord the king, I demand my right of battle. Where is the man who thinks to deprive me of mine honour? My friends and kinsmen are here, and my cause is so good that if this council do justice all must go well with me. Nor do I fear force, that be far from thee."

"Seneschal," said the queen, "if this combat may not be averted I scarce know what I may do. 'Twere well if thou wouldst leave thy claim on my daughter, and set her free; 'twould be to thy profit as well as to hers."

"Free?" said the seneschal, "yea, lady, thou wouldst fain throw up a game that is already won! But I should have put myself in much peril for little profit if I now gave up thy daughter. Lady, let there

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be an end of it—I will wed the princess, or do thou bring forth the man who slew the dragon."

"Seneschal, I hear what thou sayest, and I will prove my truth." She signed to her squire: "Bring hither the man."

Of the coming of Tristan

All the nobles looked one on the other, and a murmur ran round the hall, question and answer—all asked who the man might be, but none could tell. But now Brangœne entered, tall and stately, leading by the hand Sir Tristan. He was richly clad in a robe of purple silk, all inwoven and embroidered with gold, that glittered as he moved, and on his head was a gold and jewelled circlet. His bearing was frank and fearless, and, as he drew nearer, all made way for him. But when the men of Cornwall saw him they sprang to their feet, and came forward, greeting him joyfully; and taking him and Brangœne by the hand, they led them up to the high dais where sat the king and queen, and Tristan bowed low before them. Then as the folk clustered round, gazing at the strangers, the hostages from Cornwall saw that these were verily their kinsmen, and they made their way through the crowd,

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laughing and weeping, and greeted them gladly.

The king bade Tristan take his place beside him, and commanded silence to be made, and when all were still, he said: "Seneschal, what dost thou demand?"

"Sire, I slew the dragon."

The stranger rose and spake: "Sire, he slew it not."

"Sire, I did, and I will prove it here."

"What proof dost thou bring?" said Tristan.

"See this head, I brought it hither."

"My lord king," said Tristan, "since he brings the head as proof, bid them look within the jaws; if the tongue be there I withdraw my claim and renounce the combat."

Then they opened the jaws, and found nothing therein; and, as they marvelled, Tristan bade his squire stand forth with the tongue. "See, now, if this be the dragon's tongue or no." And all looked, and saw that it was in truth the tongue—all save the seneschal, who stood there and knew not what to say, nor whither to turn.

"Lords all," said Tristan, "mark this

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marvel. I slew the dragon, and cut this tongue from out the jaws, yet this man afterward smote it a second time to death!"

And all the lords said: "One thing is clear, he who came first and cut out the tongue was the man who slew the monster." And never a man said nay.

And the shaming of the seneschal

Then when the truth was clear, Tristan said: "My lord the king, I call thy covenant to mind; thy daughter falleth to me."

And the king said: "Sir Knight, thou hast redeemed thy pledge, I will fulfil mine."

But the seneschal cried: "Nay, he speaketh falsely! Sir King, I demand my right of combat ere I be robbed of mine honour."

"Why should he fight with thee, seneschal?" quoth the queen. "He has won what he would of my daughter. He were more foolish than a child did he fight with thee for nought."

"If he think I have done him wrong, lady," said Tristan, "I will fight with him; let him but go and make ready, and I will arm myself."

When the seneschal saw it would come

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to a combat he called his friends and kinsfolk aside to take counsel with them, but he found little comfort, for they thought the matter a shameful one, and they said: "Wherefore fight in an unrighteous cause? 'Twere but foolish to throw thy life after thy lost honour. Since the devil hath tempted thee to thine undoing, keep thy life at least."

"What would ye have me do?"

"Go thou, and say to the king that at thy friends' counsel thou dost withdraw thy challenge."

Then he did as they bade him. And the queen said mockingly: "Seneschal, never did I think to see thee give up a game that was already won." And throughout the palace, from the highest to the lowest, all made sport of the seneschal, till he scarce durst show his face for shame—so his falsehood brought him to an evil end.

Now when the matter was ended, King Gurmun made known to all his nobles the errand on which Tristan had come, and how he had granted his prayer, and solemnly in their presence he gave his daughter to Tristan's care, that he might lead her to

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Cornwall as bride to his uncle King Mark.

How King Gurmun gave his daughter into Tristan's care

Then in the face of them all did Tristan take the princess by the hand, and he spake: "King, since this lady is now my queen and my liege lady, I pray thee to deliver to her all the hostages thou dost hold of Cornwall, for now they are become her subjects, and 'tis but fitting that they should journey with her to her kingdom."

And Gurmun was willing; so with much joy the hostages were released.

Then Tristan bade them prepare a ship, such as should please both Iseult and himself, and assemble together all the men of Cornwall who were in the land that they might set sail with him.

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Notes

PAGE 3.—*Rivalin.* The names of Tristan's parents differ considerably in the varying versions of his story. In the prose *Tristan* they are Meliadus and Helyabel, and Tristan's kingdom is Leonois, or Loonois. Malory calls his mother Elizabeth, and the kingdom Lionès (Lyonnesse).

PAGE 11.—*Tristan.* Gottfried, like the other writers of his day, who only knew the story of Tristan from a French source, naturally gives the name of the hero a French derivation, connecting it with the adjective *triste*. The more probable derivation, however, is from the Pictish Drustán or Drostán. Professor Zimmer regards both Tristan and his uncle as ninth-century Pictish chieftains, and Iseult as the daughter of the Viking King of Dublin.

PAGE 21.—I have omitted the lengthy description of skinning and dissecting the stag.

PAGE 26.—*Gurún and Graalent.* The Breton *lais* were deservedly famous, and mediæval writers drew largely upon them for the incidents of their romances; certain of the mediæval romances are no more than *lais* amplified, or connected with each other. The Anglo-Norman poetess, Marie de France, translated a number of these Breton *lais* which have come down to us, among them is this very *lai* of *Graalent and his proud lady*. It is a version, more archaic in form and probably older in date, of the well-known

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story of *Lanval*. There is little doubt that the story of Tristan was originally enshrined in such detached *lais*, and sung to the accompaniment of music. We still possess certain *lais* which tradition ascribes to Tristan himself.

PAGE 43.—*Morolt*. It has been suggested that this redoubtable champion of Ireland was, in the first instance, a sea monster, and that his name was a compound of the Keltic *Mor* = the sea. The prose versions call him *le Morhout*. The fact of his close relationship to the fair Queen of Ireland, famous for her beauty, seems, however, to militate against this theory. Professor Golther suggests that the name is derived from the German *Môr-walt*, "Ruler of the Moor, or Marsh." This would account for the employment of the definite article, and indicate that the hero was known rather by his official designation than by his own proper name. It may perhaps also give a clue to the introduction of the dragon story. If the early tellers of the tale knew that such had been the champion's office, they might well have thought to emphasise the result of his death by the introduction of a monster which would doubtless have been promptly despatched had *Der Môr-walt* been living. Malory's *Sir Marhaus* is apparently a corruption of the French *Morhout*.

PAGE 48.—*'Twas a little islet in the sea*. This resort to an island for combat is one of those points of contact with Northern practice and tradition which help to complicate the *Tristan* story. Such a custom was common among the Northmen, and was known by the name of the *Holm-gang*. The island is generally identified as the Isle of St. Samson, one of the Scilly group.

PAGE 61.—Salerno was one of the famous medical schools of the Middle Ages. It will be remembered that it is thither that the hero of Hartmann von Aue's *Der Arme Heinrich* (Longfellow's *Golden Legend*) repairs with the devoted maiden who would offer her life for his healing.

PAGE 79.—"*God hath given us a valiant heir*." If

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Professor Zimmer be right in his theory, and Tristan and his uncle were Picts, then, inasmuch as Pictish descent was reckoned through the *mother*, and not through the *father*, Tristan was in any case the lawful heir, and no son born to King Mark could have invalidated his claim. In this account of the hero's departure to woo Iseult for his uncle, Gottfried alludes contemptuously to a story found in some of the versions, according to which a swallow flies into the king's hall bearing a golden hair in its beak, and Mark vows he will wed none but the maiden from whose head it was plucked. (An Aryan folk-lore feature).

Page 89.—*The fight with the dragon.* The story of a hero overcoming a monster and being robbed of the credit of his exploit by a traitor who claims the hand of the princess as his guerdon is a wide-spread Aryan folk tale. Mr. Hartland in his *Legend of Perseus* (vol. iii.) has fully examined the story, and published a tabulated list of the principal variants. Strangely enough the *Tristan* variant has escaped his notice. A similar adventure is ascribed to Lancelot in *Le Cerf au pied blanc*, and also in the Dutch poem of *Morien*. This latter has some very close points of affinity with the *Tristan* story. Most probably this episode did not originally form part of the *Tristan* legend (I have suggested above a motive for its introduction) though it was added to it at an early date. It has slipped out of most of the prose versions, only *one* out of the twenty-four MSS. preserved in Paris, and only *three* of the printed versions have retained it (Löseth, *Le Roman en prose de Tristan*).

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